A TORY LORDLING.

BY

"BLINKHOOLIE."

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VOL. II.

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BY

BLINKHOOLIE,

AUTHOR OF "BLAIR ATHOL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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A TORY LORDLING.

CHAPTER I.

"Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibusque."—*Horace.*

Oh, sport! sport! sport! whither art thou vanished; or in what semblance dost thou come upon the earth in these degenerate days? Mayhap in times now past the spirit of sport was not wholly pure; deeds were there then far from commendable, and the cry of the "nobbler" was heard in the land, nor was Dan Dawson any very exceptional character. Yet sport reigned triumphant for all that; we need but to hear in any Yorkshire village the records of the past told by men who

knew the great horses of other days; to mark the minute recollection of how Alice Hawthorn or Kingston walked down from Hambleton to do great deeds here, there, and everywhere; to see the glistening eyes of the old cronies of the village who are touching up these delicious memories with a little drop of drink and the beloved "churchwardens." Ah! 'tis of no avail to suggest the rogueries of the past, for it is certain that the sport then was strong enough to live down all roguery.

The last scene of pure chivalry in horse-racing was when the stable boys of Newmarket received and escorted the glorious Prince Charlie after his defeat of Peut Etre. Since then everything has been hard and cold; honest perhaps, but still cold.

It was some little time before Ascot, and John Spriggs, the Duke of Countryholm's

pri vate trainer, was sitting in the bar of the Bull Hotel at Harrington. The landlord, William Trueman, was a quaint character, who had mixed much among turf men, and indeed had seen life of all sorts; a worthy man in his way, but not a turf moralist. One or two of the betting fraternity were present, notably Macvay, who made a large book, for a local man. It was a curious scene—market-day, and ceaseless interchange of drinks, with the wiliest of efforts all round to extract information.

"They tell me," said Trueman, "that Mr. Spriggs' horse'll walk in for the Stakes."

"Walk in with the crowd," muttered Mr. Spriggs; "or, likelier still, won't start."

"Now, none of your 'kidding,' John; you needn't try to sell your friends.

Don't we all know as Leander is a stone better horse than what he's ever run yet."

"Did I tell you that?" asked Mr. Spriggs, in apparent trepidation.

"Why, of course you did! That night when you and me and Bill Jones finished up all that old whisky of yours."

Something like a frown came over Spriggs's jolly red countenance. "What a fool I must have been to say so! Only now, lads, that you know, don't go for to tell any one else. What would the duke think if he heard tell of me splitting on stable secrets? Don't tell any one else, or it'll be a bad job for me. Good day, Bill; I'll go home, or I'll be telling you something more," and so, with rueful countenance, he departed, leaving the occupants of the bar intensely gratified, though, had they seen the expression on the trainer's face after he got outside

the door, they might have been a little puzzled.

As it was, the injunction of secrecy was, of course, unheeded. Macvay lost no time in wiring to various quarters to back Leander for the Ascot Stakes; and, as luck would have it, no lesser light than Billy Nicholl arrived at the Bull shortly afterwards, being on his way to a neighbouring meeting, and making his headquarters there.

His appearance was the signal for much suppressed excitement; but the landlord was left to carry on the diplomacy. We will not give a verbal transcript of what the Nottingham Town Councillor said, but the conversation was to the following effect:—

Landlord: Well, Billy, and what's going to win the Stakes?

Nicholl: Don't know; Jocelyn, maybe.

Landlord: What about Leander?

Nicholl: Slow as a man; not a 100 to 1 chance.

The company in chorus: Will you lay that to me?

Nicholl (*looking around*): Well, of all the —— fools I ever saw, you are the —— est. You know something, you do, and have no more sense than let me know it too. Well, I don't mind laying twenty ponies once.

Landlord: Done with you, Billy.

Nicholl: Why, I never saw such a keen lot of sportsmen. Here, I'll lay ten ponies against Leander.

Macvay: I'll take it.

Nicholl: Take it! Hang them, there's something up. Now, Bill Trueman, you old liar, tell us what's the game?

Of course, it ended in Trueman telling all he knew, and the very next day

Leander was favourite for the Ascot Stakes.

A day or so afterwards Beau and Henry had obtained leave to visit home for a few days, ostensibly on business affairs, but really to see the horses. It was a quiet business enough, and might well have been dispensed with, for there is really no conceivable reason why the ceremony of trying horses in the presence of their owner should be carried on, if a trainer be trustworthy. Nine times out of ten it does positive harm. Moreover, the owner, if he be young, is generally profoundly ignorant of the bearing of the trial on the collateral form of the day.

However, it had to be done, and of course at daybreak, albeit the ground was absolutely secluded. Beau and Henry had arisen preternaturally early, and driven on to Spriggs' house, who was already waiting

for them, and looking the picture of contentment, nor was there the slightest sign of human life anywhere near, save where the stable-boys bustled around, and the one or two crack jockeys engaged for the occasion touched their caps to the duke with some condescension. The training ground was on the flat table-land on the top of the hills at the back of the castle, and there was no covert for touts within miles.

"Now, Spriggs, what do you intend to do?" asked Beau.

"Well, your Grace, I've borrowed Indian Ocean from my uncle at Newmarket, and we've got Ptarmigan to make a pace. Jason, and Queen Mary, with light lads up, are good enough to stretch the necks of most, and so they'll start. Now, I shall ask our horse to give Indian Ocean two stone, and that'll be good enough, I think."

"Why, Spriggs," said Henry, "Leander, a four-year-old, give old Indian Ocean two stone! It isn't possible!"

"I think he'll do it, my lord. My brother Fred, here, shall ride the Ocean, and old Johnny'll be up on Leander; and, I think, Leander will win."

"Well," said Beau, "let's try them and find out."

Then came the mysterious process of arranging the weights, presumably without the jockeys' knowledge; and now into the crisp morning air—with the hazy mist just lifting from the moor, and the rising sun beginning to command the day—the horses are brought out fresh and blooming; Leander, the perfection of condition, bucks playfully, yet with the force of a catapult, almost before "honest" John is in the saddle, and that worthy has a somewhat unseemly scramble on the horse's neck,

before he recovers himself; but the horse has the sweetest of tempers, and means no harm.

Leander is by Rataplan, out of Firefly by Touchstone, her dam sister to Glencoe. A rare pedigree; and the horse—himself a big powerful chestnut, up to sixteen stone—has all the character of his sire, with better shoulders, and more agreeable action.

Indian Ocean, a lengthy bay, of good quality, with no great substance, can stay for a week, and has won many a big handicap. Ptarmigan goes like the wind for any distance up to a mile—perhaps a little over it; Jason and Queen Mary are smart platers.

'Tis a pretty sight to see them canter off to the starting-point, the horses pulling and stretching in lusty and emulous vigour, cracking at the nostrils in the manner that

bespeaks extra good bellows, and, as it were, revelling in the luxury of health and contained energy.

"Stand here, your Grace," says Spriggs. "They'll go past us once, and finish next time round; we can see 'em all the way."

And now Spriggs holds up his hand, and by mutual consent the lot start. Ptarmigan, of course, comes raking away with the lead; the rest pretty much together. "Lord, but that horse can go a cracker!" says Spriggs, as Ptarmigan dashes past them. "Keep with him, lads, if you can," he adds in a shout to the jockeys. "No use making a pace if you don't ride up to it; go on, Johnny, old man." The last words to old "Johnny," who is bringing up the rear on Leander.

"It's all very well in a race," explained Spriggs, to let a horse run loose when you

know he'll not stay the course, but when you're trying your own horses to stay, it's no use putting in a sprinter, unless you make them gallop with him."

But the youngsters are watching the race as it progresses on the far side. The ot are closing up; but Ptarmigan still leads; Jason and Queen Mary next, Leander last. "They've gone a mile and a half!" cries Spriggs. "They ought to have beat that horse before now; however, there, he's done." As he spoke Ptarmigan dropped clean back, and the others began racing in earnest. Now Queen Mary is out of it, and now Jason.

"Business at last," mutters Spriggs. Well, it amounts to nothing, after all, in the way of a race. Indian Ocean is never really in the hunt, for Leander, directly he is given his head, romps home by ten lengths.

"By gum!" says the trainer, "but that's a smasher!"

"Why!" cries Henry. "He would win the Stakes with a stone more."

"He would that," assents Spriggs.

Beau made few observations, till Henry having gone off to look at the horse and accompany him homewards, he said to Spriggs.

"It's a pity, Spriggs, this horse is such a favourite. How are we to back him?"

Spriggs looked curiously at the young duke, as if to fathom his meaning, then remarked with caution,—

"Why, yes, it is a shame when owners can't back their own, and them as has nought to do with it makes the money."

"How is it the people have backed him in this way? Have they been told anything?"

Here Beau looked sharply at Spriggs.

"Not a word, your Grace. Lord help us; who should tell them? But it's just because they know the horse has a bit of form, and they believe in your Grace."

"Well, I don't care about winning the Stakes for a lot of outsiders. Is the horse in the Cup?"

"Yes, your Grace; but I think he can't land that quite."

"Well, then, the Wokingham Stakes; win that with him."

"Very good, your Grace; and you don't want to win the Stakes?"

"No; so don't bother me any more about it."

And Beau sauntered off, leaving Spriggs not a little astonished, for it never occurred to him that a disinclination to win the Stakes could mean anything less than a deliberate desire to have the horse roped.

It is, of course, tolerably certain that Beau meant rather that he didn't want the horse to start at all.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fred Spriggs, who was by no means the immaculate jockey that many imagined, had, as he thought, stolen a march even on his brother, and wired off to town to back Leander. The horse stood at 6 to 4 in the betting that afternoon, and, said the *Sportsman*, "will probably be backed against the field before the flag falls."

CHAPTER II.

"A dinner lubricates business."
Boswell's "Johnson."

After returning to Oxford, having witnessed the trial of Leander for the Ascot Stakes, Henry received the following letter, dated from Hughenden :—

My dear Lord Henry,—I write a fugitive line to you from here, where I am taking a day or so's rest, to say I hope you are not forgetting the possibilities of politics. Write to me your feelings and fancies in the matter. There is a future before you, if you like.

The weather is frightfully hot in town, and our party seems to be demoralized by

it. Lord Derby would only discuss Ascot the last time I saw him; and so he had the discussion to himself. He said among other things that your brother would win the Ascot Stakes—he has himself backed the horse. I know no man like Lord Derby, so wrapped up in sport, and yet so hard a worker. He is a terrible martyr to gout now, which renders indomitable energy all the more remarkable. I wonder if Horace had an eye to the gout when he wrote *Delicta majorum immeritus lues*, &c.

And now let me end this missive, which is meaningless, except to notify to you that I have not forgotten you.

Yours,

D.

Yes, there was no mistake about that "D." It stood for Disraeli; and Henry was the proud possessor of a letter from the great man whom the Conservative

Party could not forbear to follow. He was amazed at first. Why should he be selected for this honour? what was there about him to merit the special care of Disraeli? He confessed himself unable to guess; but then he went on to think, "Whatever I am now, I may, perhaps, make myself worthy; who knows but that some day I might—ah! it seems impossible; yet as he has taken this view, I'll do my best, at any rate."

He wrote back a simple, honest letter, expressing his intention to get forward according to his best ability, and hoping to always stand well with Mr. Disraeli. Whether the statesman thought much or little of it, is not easy to tell; but it is not improbable that the letter from his almost boy correspondent is among those which Lord Rowton will publish in the good time coming.

Meanwhile Ascot was close at hand.

"I shall drive a team over from Oxford," said Beau.

"Ah! well," said Henry, "as I want to really get to Ascot, I think I shall go up to town, and on by train."

"Oh, go, by all means, if you doubt my coachmanship. Tom, you aren't afraid?"

"Not I! though I expect you'll come to grief; but what matters that?"

"I'm not afraid," said Henry; "but I want to get to Ascot, as I said before; and, therefore, I'll take the surest means of getting there."

So, sure enough, Henry got leave on some excuse to go up to town, and the first thing he did was to leave cards on Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli. That is to say, he was about to leave them when the door opened, and out came Disraeli himself, on his way to the House.

He seemed really pleased to see Henry, and asked him to walk along towards Westminster, which he, of course, did.

"By-the-way," said the chief, "if you don't mind short notice, come to dinner to-night. I have just heard Malmesbury, who was coming, is laid up with the gout —all our men seem gouty—and you will take his place."

Henry was delighted.

"When I was your age," continued Disraeli, "I felt ready to take any man's place; and now—ah! well, perhaps I am still a little young."

"And what is the political prospect?" asked Henry.

"Dark and obscure. The man who invented the name 'Conservative' deserves to be shot; it has been the bugbear of our party."

"You mean that Conservatism conveys

only the selfish idea—nothing generous about it."

"Exactly; and in appealing to the people, what claim has it to sympathy? Could we but make it known that we are the Tories, whose aims and objects are nothing if not national and for the good of all, there would soon be an end of your effete Whigs, and your self-seeking Radicals; but I mustn't go on talking now. I have a speech to make. Good-bye till dinner-time."

This attention from Disraeli did more than anything to stir up the ambition that had so long lain dormant in Henry's breast; and long before he went to dinner he had resolved to be a statesman, or perish in the attempt.

Those who have ever dined with the Disraelis will well remember the charms of the great man's conversation. Silent,

as a rule, to an irritating extent, he could, when he exerted himself, shine as a conversationalist almost without a rival, and on this night he was in his happiest vein.

Lord Derby, too, who was there, was in excellent form, and created many a merry laugh by his genuine humour. Mrs. Disraeli was, as ever, a charming hostess, not in any way needlessly political, yet always ready to lend a sympathetic ear to a politician. Such should your statesman's wife be—not aspiring to manipulate a party, but to please and gratify it by discreet attention.

Henry was a good deal out of his element among such an old company. He was positively the only person there under forty; but he none the less held his own bravely with the Duchess of Middlesex, who was alloted to his care. A terribly

high-caste dame was she, and she enlightened him not a little on the condition of London society.

"Ah!" said she, "since poor dear Lord Palmerston fell ill there seems to be an end of everything. You see women being pushed forward, and posing as great people—having a *salon*, forsooth! when they are absolute nobodies. Why, there's Lady Thomson—you'll always see her name in the papers—she has been assiduously written into society; so have Lady Dingwell and Mrs. Montresor. It is disgraceful to see the unblushing way in which the paragraph-writers—I think they call them—have pushed these women forward. Why, one would think the shades of their presence had been at the elbow of the court functionary who the other day invited the Corps Diplomatique to the Queen's reception in terms that the

Queen 'would graciously receive them, *male and female.*'"

Acid conversation like this was not much to Henry's mind, but the dinner ended presently, and when the ladies were gone he had a pleasanter time. Lord Derby hardly knew him, and did not look upon him very favourably, even when Disraeli said,—

"Our young friend here, Henry Bolingbroke, is to do us good service presently."

"Oh, don't talk about presently," said Lord Derby. "I see no hope of power presently; so our young friend had better occupy himself in telling us about Leander."

"Why, you surely don't profess poetry, Henry?" said Disraeli.

"Not I; and Lord Derby doesn't mean Hero's Leander, but a Leander who to-morrow will be a hero."

"The worst of Disraeli," said Lord Derby, laughing, "is that he never *will* understand sporting matters. I haven't yet forgiven him the description of the Derby which he once committed to a novel, or his statement that a beautiful mare had 'legs like an antelope.'"

Disraeli smiled. "We are not all Crichtons, like yourself," he rejoined; "otherwise the genius of mankind would lift the earth to heaven."

"A most serious matter, my Lord," interposed Sir Augustus Thomson, "this Reform question—Property will not long be secure, I fear."

"And the Church is in danger," added Mr. Montresor.

"Oh! very possibly," said Lord Derby. "But what's that got to do with Ascot?"

"Property," said Disraeli, "will be se-

cure so long as its owners do their duty; the Church will be safe so long as it supplies the religious wants of the nation."

"Palmerston is very ill, they tell me," said Mr. Montresor. "How will that affect the elections?"

"Unfavourably to us," said Disraeli; "the sympathy of the nation will be in the scale against us."

"Now, do let us hear about Leander!" persisted Lord Derby. "What is wrong with him?"

"Nothing at all!" cried Henry. "I saw him win his trial myself. He can't be beaten to-morrow."

"Indeed; I hope you are right, for I have backed him; but he travels badly in the betting this afternoon."

"Some hedging money, I suppose?" suggested Mr. Montresor.

"Possibly."

The evening ended early; and Henry hardly knew whether to be pleased or otherwise with this his first experience.

CHAPTER III.

"Equorum cursus prohibitus."—*University Statutes.*

"HERE, I'll bet against Leander!" shouted Steele in a loud, decisive voice. "Two to one against Leander; Leander I want to bet against."

It was a beautiful day at Ascot, and the scene was, as it ever is, one of unrivalled attraction. Nowhere else can you enjoy yourself so much, if you really like horses; nowhere else can you see gathered together so many grand specimens of the thorough-bred—all the classic winners of the day. The paddock at Ascot is and always has been supreme.

And what sight of its kind equals the Royal enclosure, or displays so splendidly the best and worst features of the English character?—on the one hand a gathering of all the best and noblest in the nation; on the other an accumulation of inquisitive 'Arrys and curious 'Arriets indulging in a ceaseless stare over the rails at the fashionables.

Henry was in the enclosure, and wondering much what had become of Beau. He felt anxious to see him because the market was growing still more hostile to Leander. The horse looked the perfection of health, but Spriggs was suspiciously oracular when questioned as to the betting.

"What on earth can be the meaning of it?" Henry had asked him.

"Can't say, my Lord. Them as does it knows best."

Lord Derby came to have a look at

Leander. "Well, Spriggs," said he, "can you beat my horse?"

"Toxophilite's a good horse, my Lord; but I think we shall make him gallop."

"Bolingbroke," said Lord Derby, as they strolled away, "are you quite sure all is right?"

"Certain; the trial was undeniable."

"Well, here's the Prince; come and tell him so."

Henry was accordingly introduced to the Prince of Wales, who went very much to the point at once in the matter of the horse.

"And you are quite sure there is not a screw loose anywhere?"

"Quite sure, Sir; the horse is as well as possible."

The Prince lost no time in despatching a faithful companion to back Leander for him, and still might be heard Steele's voice: "Leander I want to bet against. Three to one against Leander."

The horses were now saddled—nine starters had gone down to the post. Toxophilite and Corcyra were pressing Leander closely in the betting, the former ridden by Fordham, the latter by Morris; yet on form they could have no chance. Just prior to the start Beau suddenly appeared on the scene, hot and dusty. Henry rushed up to him at once.

"Where on earth have you been?"

"Oh, that brute of a leader bolted into a ditch passing a show waggon, and—well, we all capsized. No one hurt, of course; but it's a confounded nuisance being so late. What's the race?"

"Three to one against Leander!" bellowed Steele, from hard by.

"Why, what the devil! Leander starting! That fool Spriggs! I'll stop this at once!"

"They're off!" roars the crowd.

"Three to one against Leander!"

Beau is bewildered, and excited, and enraged.

"Here—oh, I must back him. Hi, you fellow, what about Leander?"

"Three to one, your Grace," says Steele, who knows the duke well, though himself unknown.

"How much are you good for?" asked Beau.

Steele stared at him in astonishment.

"As much as your Grace is. My name's Steele."

"Oh, Ah! I beg your pardon. Will you lay me thirty thousand to ten?"

"Certainly"—and the bet was booked, though Steele was profoundly surprised to see the readiness with which Beau accepted it. Yet he could not be mistaken; Leander was not to win that day.

"Well, I want to back Toxophilite!" cried he. "Will any one lay fours against Toxophilite?"

None of his fellow-bookmakers seemed so disposed. The words struck on the ears of Beau just as the horses came past the stand the first time.

"Confound the fellow!" muttered he. "I may as well draw him when there's a chance"—and he hurried back to the rails of the enclosure.

"Steele, I'll lay you the odds against Toxophilite."

"Very good, your Grace. Four thousand to one?"

"Yes. Again if you like?"

"Certainly; again."

And then Beau hurried off to see the race. Something carrying Mr. Jardine's colours was making the pace a cracker, along on the far side of the course.

Leander was lying fourth, and going well, old "Johnny" riding as warily as ever, and judging the pace to a nicety. Henry stands not far from Lord Derby, some distance from Beau, and gazes at the race with equal anxiety. Toxophilite is lying off, and they are now at the old mile post; the leader drops back, and the field is beginning to take closer order. Mr. Merry's colours are in the van as they make the turn into the straight, and face the long, punishing hill. Old "Johnny" still bides his time, and Toxophilite is closing up rapidly.

On they come. "Leander wins! Leander walks in!" cries Henry, who is certain that the horse will go clean away from his field as soon as he gets the office. "Leander —"

But they are near the distance now, and there is a suspicious "niggling" at

Leander on the part of his jockey, while the rider of Toxophilite looms alongside, motionless as a rock.

Good heavens, it is only too true! "Leander's beat!" that is the cry; and old "Johnny" sits down for just an effort —it is useless; the horse is dead in his hands, and like the true horseman he is, he eases him at once, while Toxophilite sails away from the rest and wins in a canter by eight lengths.

Lord Derby is in ecstasies, and Henry fairly gasps with astonishment. Beau, mad with rage, rushes to find Spriggs, whom he soon encounters.

"Spriggs, what the devil does this mean?"

"Mean, your Grace! why, you told me the horse wasn't to win the Stakes!"

"Saints alive, man! I meant you

weren't to start him. There have I lost 18,000*l.*!"

"Dear, dear!" said Spriggs, "'tis a sad thing, a sad thing—but you'll win it all back before the week's out—dear, dear, who'd ha' thought it?"

"You thieving scoundrel," muttered Beau, "I ought to dismiss you right off; but—well, we'll talk about that next week."

"Horse didn't run up to his trial, Mr. Spriggs?" interposed a special commissioner who had gone for him in a sporting paper.

"No," said Spriggs, "maybe he had gripes, maybe he can't stay, maybe we've made a mistake—leastways we've dropped our coin."

And the world was informed next morning that that most promising young sportsman, the Duke of Gainsborough, had

sustained a severe disappointment in the failure of Leander, through want of stamina, to win the Ascot Stakes—"a matter which Mr. Spriggs, the trainer, explained to us in the most open manner possible."

CHAPTER IV.

"Aristocratic Ascot."—*Old Saying.*

It was the Royal Hunt Cup day at Ascot, and Beau had driven safely on to the course. He had this time persuaded the ladies to accompany him, so that his coach was well occupied. Mrs. Lee Fenwick was with them, as usual, and it was little notice that Beau took of the racing under these circumstances.

There is, in some degree, an absence of restraint at a race meeting, and lunch on a drag is always an inspiriting affair, so our young duke was on famously good terms with himself, and Mrs. Lee Fenwick never appeared so charming.

As for Henry, he managed to get Dorothy to descend and walk with him, first to the paddock, and then alongside the straight mile course towards the starting-point for the Hunt Cup. It was a glorious day, as is so often the case at Ascot; and they wandered on, thinking little or nothing of where they were going to. Away, in some degree, now, from the busy crowd, passing by here and there a gipsy's tent, and other paraphernalia of the camp-followers of race meetings, they thought of little except each other, and this was a matter neither cared to disclose.

Dorothy was indeed growing more beautiful every day, and as yet, at any rate, she seemed to have no idea of it. There is no greater charm than genuine simplicity on such a point, and there is no greater drawback than self-consciousness.

At last she said, "Do you know, Henry, I sometimes think that Beau is not altogether what he should be?"

Henry started; "Beau! Why he's a good old fellow as ever lived, I'm sure! What do you mean?"

"Yes, I know you think that; but you judge every one superficially and make them out to be rather what you wish than what they are. I believe, for instance, that Beau is a great deal too fond of Mrs Lee Fenwick!"

"Impossible! why, oh! my dear Dorothy, it's out of the question."

"You know, Henry, I am no mischief-maker, and I wouldn't say this if I didn't think it. Women are sharper than men in noticing things. I don't know what it all means, but certain I am there's something not as it should be, and the powers of evil are conspiring against poor Beau."

"Why, you're a regular prophetess! But Mrs. Lee Fenwick—the vicar's wife! No no; it can't be."

And Henry dismissed the subject, half annoyed at any imputation being levelled at his brother.

Dorothy sighed. She had hoped to do some good by mentioning what had been to her a matter of serious observation for some time. Henry, she thought, would perhaps influence his brother for good before it was too late; and here was Henry no better than your ordinary thick-headed man, entirely failing to appreciate the truth or even the motive of what she said. Manlike he, perhaps, even thought that she was inspired by feelings of jealousy. Who can tell? It is almost certain some such fancy did cross his mind—"Dorothy, after all, has a liking for Beau—doesn't like to see him admire another."

Of all stupid creatures men are really the most stupid. This is the result of education which causes them to rely less and less on instinct, and draw on their logical capacities for any conclusion at which they desire to arrive. Perfect education and well-balanced reason are of course more trustworthy than any other guides; but the majority of men fall far short of attaining to this guidance. They lose their hold on instinct, while they but imperfectly grasp reason; thus are they between two stools questing about for what they want in a slow, mutton-headed way, while woman, whose instinct, thanks to her lesser education, is unimpaired, goes straight to the mark without a moment's delay. It is absolutely certain that women would make infinitely better detectives than men.

And these two still wandered on half

aimlessly along the beautiful heath, the hum of the busy throng behind had grown fainter, and the position was one full of charm; but Henry could not get over these ideas about Beau.

"I didn't think, Dorothy, you would have turned against dear old Beau in that way!"

"How *can* you say I turned against him? I see him, as I think, running into great danger, and I thought I might speak to you. I like him too well not to try to save him."

"Too well!" repeated Henry. "You like him *too* well, do you?"

It was a somewhat brutal remark, and he felt ashamed of himself immediately he had said it. Dorothy's eyes filled with tears; but it was only for a moment.

"I did not think *you* would have said

that, Henry! We had better go back; I have no more to say."

He looked anxiously at her; but the face he saw was very cold now, and in his heart he longed to kneel at her feet and implore forgiveness; indeed he would have done his best in this way, when suddenly strange oaths and frightful language came in a regular volley upon them. They had unconsciously strayed near the start for the Hunt Cup.

The starter's life cannot be a very happy one, and those who have ever been present when a big field is to be despatched for an important handicap will be well aware how embarrassing was the position of Henry and Dorothy. Your fashionable jockey—especially if he be a light weight—is an adept at cursing his fellows in unmeasured terms. The scene was a regular pandemonium, and the startled

couple hastily retired in such confusion that Henry never said what he had intended to say, and there was, as it were, a barrier still between them when they reached the coach.

The merriment there was at its height. Beau, in a pleasant bewilderment of flirtation; Tom entertaining Miss D'Aguilar and Mary; one or two others of the party supremely happy, from having backed the winner.

So the day closes, and we pass on to the Wokingham Stakes day, when Leander is to run and win. Fred Spriggs will ride him this time.

Beau regarded the occasion very complacently. He had no doubt of the horse being right this time, and therefore he would get his money back with interest. Nothing could be simpler. He spent the early part of the afternoon on his drag,

and it was not till the numbers for the Wokingham Stakes went up that he tore himself away from his enchantress, saying he really must go and back his horse.

Across the course he went, into the enclosure, and then making for Steele, who stood in his familiar place, he asked at once, "What against Leander?"

"Six to four."

"Six to four! Surely you can lay a better price than that?"

"That I really cannot, your Grace. Can only lay that in hundreds once."

"Oh, but surely you'll lay it in thousands?"

"Can't possibly do it. I'm full as it is. Only offer it in hundreds to oblige you."

"Well, this is too bad," muttered Beau. "Put it down, of course. I must back him elsewhere."

And he went to all the prominent book-makers one after another, but received from all the answer that they were full. He positively couldn't get another sovereign on his horse.

Beau was furious. He vowed Leander shouldn't start, and ran off to have him struck out. Meeting Henry on the way, he informed him of his intention.

"For goodness' sake do nothing of the sort!" cried Henry. "What matter does the money make to you? Don't let the papers have a chance to write nasty things about you. Come along back to the drag—you shan't scratch the horse, old fellow; you really shan't."

And Beau suffered himself to be led away grumbling.

The ring was very full indeed against Leander, for he had been backed, as it appeared, all over the country simulta-

neously, and the London and Manchester bets made by agents caused many books of big men in Tattersall's enclosure to look very lop-sided. "We'll all be cleaned out," said one of the principal bookers, if that horse wins." "Maybe he won't win," said another.

Leander was looking none the worse for his Stakes defeat. He was bright and fresh, in the most perfect condition. Spiggs eyed him over complacently as who should say, "We'll do the trick to-day."

Fred Spriggs was walking about at some little distance talking with a friend very earnestly. He did not separate from him till the saddling bell rang, and then he came sauntering up.

"Who's he, Fred?" asked the elder brother.

"Why, brother to Jack Holt, who stands

such a lot against us. I was trying to get a bit more on."

"Well, well; so long as you back your own mount, I don't mind; but don't let me ever catch you backing some one else's."

Fred laughed lightly, and, all being now ready, had a leg up into the saddle, and gave Leander a good rousing canter down towards the start.

The trainer took up his place to see the race, certain, this time, of victory. He had not long to wait. The big field was despatched at the very first attempt, and he looked eagerly for the well-known colours. He saw them not, but never dreamed of this being anything except the fault of his own eyesight.

Beau was looking from the coach with some eagerness too. "Why!" cried he, "we aren't in it." Sure enough, Leander was nowhere near the front rank.

"Leander's beat—he's not in it. Fifty to one against Leander."

These words strike on the ears of Mr. Spriggs, who turns green with dismay.

It can't be true—yes, it is. There they come; and Leander has never made a show—finishes about tenth, in fact, beaten a hundred yards.

Spriggs rushes out of the paddock to meet his brother as he rides back.

"You d—d scoundrel! What's the meaning of this?"

"Don't be vexed, old man," says Fred, complacently. "Got shut in at the start, nearly knocked over, horse never took hold of his bit—very sorry, but couldn't help it."

Spriggs looked fixedly at him.

"I don't know whether to believe you or not—but if I thought you'd sold me

I'd—and, oh to think of what I'd have won!"

"Well, it's no use talking—can't be helped."

The next day there was an unpleasant rumour that Leander's defeat was due to Beau's not having been able to back him.

CHAPTER V.

"At Christmas, play and make good cheer."
Thomas Tusser.

And the time went on—another term at Oxford, more hunting and excellent sport, the Christmas vacation, and Christmas Day at Bolingbroke Park.

Christmas Day at early morning, and the duke, as he lies in his luxurious bed, is aroused by shrill voices at the hall door.

"I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New year.
A pocket full of money and a barrel full of beer,
And a good fat pig, that will last you all the year.
Please will you give me my Christmas box?"

It is too much to be roused in this way from pleasant sleep, even on Christmas morning. He boils over with indignation, and rings for his valet.

"What's that d—d row, Charles?"

"The children from the village, your Grace."

"Send down and tell them to clear out of this at once. I never heard such impertinence."

"They always have come in this way, your Grace."

"Don't talk to me. I tell you I won't stand being disturbed like this."

So the children were sent roughly away and Beau turned over and tried to sleep; but they had effectually awakened him, and he got up in a thoroughly bad temper.

Downstairs he encountered Henry, who immediately wished him a happy Christmas.

"For goodness' sake, don't do that sort of thing!" cried Beau. "I hate Christmas and all connected with it."

"Then you must be an idiot!" said Henry, warmly. "There is just one link of good-fellowship on earth in these matter-of-fact days, and that is Christmas. Why, on this day we can be hail fellow well met with every one—no distinction of classes."

"Just the worst part about it."

"Come, now; I know you're only joking. I know you cannot but feel how grand it is for all to be friends. I tell you, Beau, that if we could break down the hard-and-fast barriers of society and make every one always as at Christmas, we should have touched a vein of politics which would never be worked out. Christmas makes the world young again, and destroys the shams of conventional life. I wish to

heaven it was thought even more of than it is!"

"I wish most fervently it was over," said Beau. "It appears to me to be simply a period for paying money, and being bored by objectionable people."

CHAPTER VI.

"But, a hunting we will go!"—*Old Song.*

Hounds generally run well on New Year's Eve—at least that is our experience; nor is anything more calculated to impress the dying year pleasantly on remembrance than a really smart gallop across country, with all the accessories of good sport, good horses, and good fellowship.

The duke's hounds were this season hunted, as it were, in commission—or, perhaps, more accurately, they were left to the arrangements of Tom Beers, the huntsman; for neither Beau nor any one else had really taken up the reins. He could hardly

pose as a master of hounds before he was of age; another season it would be different.

However, Tom Beers seemed to get along quite as well without a master, and assumed to himself the necessary authority. He showed first-rate sport, and that was the main thing, and people very soon took kindly to being kept in order by him—in fact he was, like Mr. Parnell, an uncrowned king—though only during an interregnum.

And New Year's Eve dawned cloudy and chill—a good scenting morning. The hounds met in the park, and all of the family who were given to riding turned out, of course. 'Tis an instructive sight, a meet before a big house. Watch the zealous care with which many, who would have us believe them regular top sawyers, sidle off to where the cherry brandy is being handed about by the servants. Don't think this is a mere commonplace matter; it does, in

point of fact, reveal the innermost spirit of the men.

Probably nothing would be more amusing than if men who hunt could all be brought into a palace of truth, and made to reveal their inmost feelings—how, in many cases, they hunt purely for the sake of appearances, how they rejoice when the view halloo is *not* followed by the words, "Gone away;" how they thank heaven that it has been a blank day, while outwardly objurgating it; how they find in early potations, whether from their own flasks or the hospitable liqueur glasses that are proffered them at the meet, the sole means for deadening apprehension; and how, to them, the only happy period of the day is when all is safely over, and, after dinner, they can talk about their exploits, real or imaginary. Ah, yes, there is no such humbug as the man who hunts in, we fear, the majority of cases.

Be that as it may, even Aspland had put in an appearance this morning, mounted on a large grey horse, and clad in trousers and leggings, his head adorned by a soft wide-awake. His heels were armed with gigantic spurs, and he sat strangely forward, holding his horse tightly by the head. Now, Aspland was by no means the man to hunt for any purely weak reason, and yet he was clearly ill at ease. The explanation of the matter was, however, not difficult. He had found that, with all his arts, he could not quite win the good-will of an essentially sporting people without appearing, to some extent, as a devotee of sport himself, and thus he had decided, calmly and deliberately, to hunt now and again, so as to more fully enlist the sympathies of the people. Herein, of course, he got out of his depth, for the people prefer a man who doesn't hunt to one who proves himself a duffer.

Beau, got up in the very extreme of fashion, stands at the entrance of the castle, welcoming people as a king might. The chestnut thorough-bred, in readiness for him hard by, is worthy of any rider, and calculated to get to the front in any company. Henry is mounted on a smart, wiry bay, King Diamond; and Dorothy is there, too, on her favourite, old Lucy, the steadiest and safest conveyance possible. But then Dorothy doesn't hunt—only rides to the meet, and trots about on the roads. John Harrison is there on a great, rough, four-year-old, likely to make 300 guineas next year. A pity it is farmers don't breed more of the sort. He is talking to his mother and Polly Stobbs, whom his brother Charles has driven over in the spring cart. There, too, is Tom Elliott, riding one of Beau's horses, and Mary, with Miss D'Aguilar in the pony carriage, prepared to drive the

round of the home coverts. Some 150 horsemen, not more, and not on the whole a very fashionable-looking lot, albeit some of the younger division are got up in the most regardless manner, and adorned with striking button-holes. Somehow we never see a man hunting with flowers in his coat without wishing he may come to harmless grief, and he almost invariably does.

Look, for instance, at that exquisite young Morrison, son of the great money-lender, over there. Of course, we told you so! He has dismounted for the purpose apparently of swaggering around for a few moments, and now, as he is mounting, he touches the horse with his spur on the croup. The steed bounces forward, and Mr. Morrison lands on his back behind the saddle. The sequel is obvious. A few frantic bounds, a kick or two, an ignominious clutching at the saddle, and now he sprawls

on the wet grass, amid much merriment. No harm done, of course, except to his self-conceit, which is all the better for it.

But now Beers takes on himself to move off in the direction of the covert near the cricket-ground where our story first opened. The morning air is fresher now, and all who are of the right sort begin to feel the delightful excitement of anticipated sport. "Come along with me, Dorothy!" cries Henry. "We'll get forward on the other side of the bank, for I know he'll go away in that direction, if at all, and you'll get a rare view." So they cantered along, and up one of the rides—the covert, as will be remembered, being on a hill-side facing the castle—so out to within measurable distance of the Harrington road.

Beers put his hounds into covert quietly, as one who means business, keeping his field well in check the while; and now you begin

to hear the echoing voices which sound so fresh and gay on a hunting morning ; soon too comes the tell-tale whimper, as one hound opens on the drag, then another, and presently a full chorus.

"He's at home, and no mistake," says Henry in a low voice, and the second whip, who is near them, peers anxiously ahead to the end of the wood.

Dorothy knows not what to think of it exactly ; but the approaching music of the hounds is, to say the least of it, exciting, and her colour begins to heighten, while even old Lucy paws the ground with some animation.

"Yonder he goes," whispers Henry, pointing to the "thief of the world," as he steals away, some fifty yards in front of them, gives his brush a defiant whisk, and disappears through the next fence.

"Away!"

The voice of the whip is good enough for anything, and the hounds fly to him.

"Away!"

What a clattering and hustling there is as the field are getting forward from the park below! Dorothy looks at Henry, her eyes sparkling with the unwonted scene.

"Oh! Henry, do you think I could follow, just a little way?"

Now Henry had been wondering what on earth under the circumstances to do with Dorothy. He couldn't leave her exactly, and her suggestion seemed to be the only way by which he could avail himself of the magnificent start which was now offered.

"All right!" he cried; "come on;" and without hesitating more, sent his horse over the plain stake and bound fence in front of them, and Dorothy landed safely in his track.

"Don't get too near me!" he cried; and

then away they scuttled, being practically alone with the hounds except for the whip.

Every one knows that when hounds really run, and you get a bad start, you seldom—if ever—can catch them, and there was no mistake about the way they went this day, so that the stragglers and strugglers never could get within hail. To Henry, who was with them all the way, and was well mounted, the thing was simple enough; but his heart misgave him once or twice when he thought of Dorothy, who had seldom, indeed, ridden over even a minute fence. Still, like all women, she was full of pluck, and when Henry looked anxiously back to see her clear a stiff rail and big uncompromising ditch, she rode up alongside him, her cheeks glowing with exercise and animation,—

"Oh, Henry, isn't this beautiful?"

"It is, indeed; but for God's sake be careful!"

"This is a cracker, my lord," remarks the whip. "There's Harrington Brook, away there; hadn't you best take Miss Dorothy round by the bridge?"

"Certainly not!" cries Dorothy, overhearing them. "Come along, I'll give you a lead," and she rattles old Lucy down a long swampy pasture towards where the willows tell of water, and the hounds are even now engaged in scrambling and swimming.

Henry comforts himself with the reflection that old Lucy has never probably jumped water, and is very unlikely to face this; but he is mistaken, any one with an absolutely unshaken nerve can make a horse do wonders, and the old mare flies the sixteen feet of water in grand style, while Henry's horse drops his hind legs in, and

the result is a harmless fall, soon put right. The whip gets over with a scramble, and again the cry is "Forward."

And now they come to very heavy land, and old Lucy begins to show signs of distress. She wasn't fit to start with; but unfortunately ladies will never understand these matters. The whip's horse lands into the next ditch, and remains there contented but immovable for the present. "Go on, sir; go on!" cries the whip, "else the hounds 'll run clean away from us," and so Henry still pounds along with Dorothy alone.

The hounds have been bending rather to the right for the last ten minutes, and are now pointing direct to the black plantation. More deep ground, and old Lucy hangs out signals of distress. "Dorothy, dear, you must take a pull at the mare—she's beat."

"Ha, ha! you are getting jealous, are

you?—see if she doesn't beat you!" Such is Dorothy's answer, and, heedless of Henry, she drives the mare, now blundering and faltering in her stride, at the next fence, a small one but stiff.

"Good God! I knew it!" cried Henry in an agony; for there was the sickening sight of a regular crumpling fall. The mare scarcely rose at the fence, and rolled clean over her rider on the other side.

In another instant Henry was over, and down by the side of Dorothy, who lay motionless, while the poor old mare, her flanks heaving like a pair of bellows, and her tail shaking up and down, stood ruefully by.

"My God! is she killed? Dorothy, darling Dorothy, my own! Oh! what can I do?" and Henry grasped frantically for his whiskey flask, and then tore, manlike, at Dorothy's collar, to give her breathing room.

Trembling all over, he forces the whiskey flask between her lips, and pours. No woman would have done so ; but, somehow it was efficacious ; for, as he ejaculated once more, "My darling! my darling!" the large eyes opened, and she looked tenderly and lovingly at him.

He was kneeling on one knee, supporting her head on the other. "Where am I, Henry, dear?"

"All right;—with me—don't you see? Near the Black Plantation. Have a little more whiskey."

"Whiskey! How silly you are! But I don't remember at all. Why am I here? Let me get up."

And Dorothy made an effort to rise, only to fall back again with a faint cry,—

"Oh! Henry, my leg is broken!"

Henry was horrified. Not a soul within hail, and no house near ; yet there lay Dorothy, her sweet, pale face turned up to

his, the dear eyes mutely expressing pain —a broken leg ! and he, stupid oaf that he was, what *could* he do ?

Yes, what could he do ? It was a situation which served to illustrate how out of place ladies are hunting ; but that availed nothing, and as he sat there with her head on his knee, and made futile efforts to give her more whiskey, it is doubtful whether his mental agony was not a greater torture than her physical.

The concussion of the fall had, for a while, deprived Dorothy of all reasoning powers, and she suggested nothing, so Henry still sat and sat, it seemed to him for ages, half mad with the consciousness that he must do something, yet hopelessly unable to think of anything but the whiskey flask.

CHAPTER VII.

"The silent doctor shook his head."—*Gay.*

And Henry still sat hopeless, with Dorothy's head pillowed on one of his knees, their horses standing quietly near. What *could* he do in this case of a broken leg?

To add to his trouble, a lot of bullocks, grazing in the field, came hustling up in their impertinent, inquisitive fashion, and, one encouraging the other, bade fair to seriously bother him. He menaced them by an angry wave of his hand, and by throwing a stone; but this only startled his own horse, and shook Dorothy in a

way that hurt her badly, as he could well see, from the sudden expression of pain on her face. Between keeping off these idiotic bullocks, and thinking what to do for her, he was fairly distraught.

Suddenly, hard by, not more than ten yards to the right, there came, from the other side of the fence, a sound of horses galloping, then looming, big in the air, there arose the form of a grey horse, taking the hedge slant-wise, with a prodigious bound, and on his back, dishevelled and hatless, was the form of Aspland. Another moment and another horse, jumping almost the same place—indeed the grey had shot right across him—and this time it was Beau's chestnut and Beau.

But the bulky Aspland wholly failed to maintain his equilibrium while jumping thus askew. On the contrary, he rolled, sack-like, over the off shoulder of his

horse, fell with a dull thud on the ground, and remained motionless. Beau's horse very nearly landed on him.

"Confound you! Serve you right if you've broken your neck, crossing me in that way!" cried the irate duke, hardly decided whether or not to even pull up and see what harm was done. Then suddenly he heard Henry's voice, "Hi, Beau, old man; for God's sake come here," and, turning, saw his brother and Dorothy.

A moment explained all. There was a doctor out somewhere behind, Beau declared, and the only thing was to find him.

"Well, you come along here," cried Henry, "I'll go," and in a moment Beau found himself the supporter of Dorothy, while Henry jumped on his horse and rode back in hot haste, leaving Aspland

grunting and wheezing on the ground as if he were a mere nothing.

It is an anxious thing to ride for a doctor, so much so, that whoever does it becomes as a rule so overwrought before they reach him that they generally gallop back as hard as they came, though there is absolutely no motive for this speedy return journey. Henry came upon the doctor much sooner than might have been expected, but the slowness of the man when found was dreadful. He was a fat, dull, methodical doctor—taking hunting-exercise for the benefit of his liver.

"Dear me, dear me!" said he, on hearing what had occurred. "Very unfortunate! Now let me see—"

"Hadn't you better come along at once?"

"By no means, my dear sir; I must first think of what I want before I can do

any good. Let me see—scissors, a needle and thread,—yes—some strips of linen—some mill-board,—Bristol-board or anything stiff—yes, then we must have some conveyance—yes. You see, my good sir, there are a good many things required before I can stir."

"Oh, go along as hard as you can, I'll get the things ; " and Henry actually cracked his whip behind the doctor's plethoric cob, which started it off at unwonted speed in the direction of the fatal spot, while he himself sped away to John Harrison's farmhouse to get the needful accessories.

On the way he encountered Miss D'Aguilar and Mary in the pony carriage —this to his inexpressible relief—and sent them hurrying forward ; while very soon he had secured the bandages, &c., from old Mrs. Harrison, who wrung her hands in an ecstasy of dismay at the news.

Back he galloped, feeling almost pleased to have been of some service after the despairing tribulation of being able to do nothing.

Soon he sighted the now greatly increased group around the prostrate form, and on coming nearer observed with anger that the doctor was engaged in attending to Aspland, who was now standing up, all right, while Dorothy was still where Henry left her.

"Here are the things, doctor," cried Henry, coming up at a hand gallop. "For goodness' sake, make haste!"

"Ah, yes, certainly; I told you some little time ago I wanted these things. Yes, yes; of course."

"Of course you did. Pray don't delay any longer."

"Certainly, certainly; let me see;" and the doctor, with Henry, pushed through

the group to find that Tom Elliot had already, with simple common sense, made Dorothy fairly comfortable; or at least so far so that he was about to get her lifted into the carriage, which, by an arrangement of a hurdle across the two seats, and with cushions and rugs on the top of it, he had extemporized into a tolerable ambulance.

"What, in heaven's name, have you done, Tom?" cried Henry.

"Why, see, I've cut the top off one of my boots; then cut that open right down one side, fitted it round her leg, and bandaged it up with a whiplash and pocket-handkerchiefs. It will do as well as anything till we get her home. Come out of the way, doctor."

And while the doctor stood by without saying a word, Tom, with the assistance of one or two others, had lifted Dorothy

gently on to the carriage, and was leading the ponies quietly off, Miss D'Aguilar and Mary walking by the side.

"Why on earth," muttered Henry, "hadn't I the sense to act like that?"

"A most intelligent young man, your cousin, Lord Henry," said the doctor.

Henry looked scornfully at him, and rode after the carriage.

Coming up with Beau, he asked him how on earth he and Aspland came to be riding together.

"Don't know at all," said Beau; "but the fellow seemed to single me out, and rode at whatever place I did. Never knew anything like it; and I couldn't get away from him, for that grey of his can gallop like anything. The very first fence he landed right on his horse's neck. That stopped him a bit, and I slipped along forward; but he caught me again just as

I was riding at a weak place, and I was obliged to pull off and jump a great big chump in the fence. He was on his horse's ears that time, but he always scrambled back, and when you saw us he had just caught me again, crossed my horse almost in his last stride, with what result you saw."

"What on earth did he mean by it?"

"Can't say, I'm sure. Wonder if any one will catch the hounds to-day? Poor Dorothy! it's awful hard lines!"

Meanwhile Aspland was congratulating himself on having shown to the sporting world that a man of his calibre could equal the aristocracy—so called—even in horsemanship.

"'Tis better that I got a fall," thought he. "It will prove that I rode hard, and will create sympathy."

CHAPTER VIII.

"All love is sweet—
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever."

Shelley.

Broken legs, like broken hearts, are not irreparable, and, in due course, Dorothy was restored to health and strength. A few months had passed away, and it was now the Easter vacation. Beau had finally departed from Oxford, but Henry and Tom remained, and were contemplating their final schools next term. The result of such contemplation was that they righteously resolved to stay up at Oxford during the vacation, and so we may behold

them prepared for the sacrifice, together with a small and select coterie, in their lodgings, 77, George Street.

On the first night they feel that some relaxation is permissible, just by way of inaugurating a sterner *régime*, and so, of course, there is dinner at the Randolph, and then some one remembers that a comic opera company is going to play *Madam Angot* at the "Vic." this night, and it is suggested that for this occasion only they should go.

Oh! what a place is that same "Vic." and what a hideous satire on the thick-headedness of the authorities who, refusing permission for legitimate theatrical performances during term time, caused this little wretched hole—pretentiously named "The Victoria Theatre"—to be the sole outlet in Oxford for the desire of amusement, and brought about the apotheosis

of the Great Vance, and other such celebrities, as the acme of entertainment!

Howbeit, now in the vacation, good Mrs. Fortescue is not debarred from bringing her company down, and our friends soon find themselves in a stage-box, listening for the first time to those ever-fascinating strains. The "Lange" of the piece may be a trifle heavy and emotionless, the "Ange Pitou" somewhat flat in divers notes, the chorus only so-so, but Miss Lucy L'Eclair is the most fascinating "Clairette" possible; not pretty, exactly, yet endowed with such delightful *chic*, and acting with such irresistible go—so full of spirits, so sweet-voiced, that—well, we regret to say Henry was very soon gazing at her with undisguised admiration.

There was something quite overpowering in her method of rendering the familiar

"Sure I am the child of my mother;"

and it is needless to say to any one who has been at the "Vic.," that to be in a stage-box there is to be so near the performers, that in this case the danger to our innocent youths was great.

Miss L'Eclair very soon saw the evident admiration of Henry, and gave him one or two sweetly roguish glances, especially on one occasion when she came within two feet of him, and then tripped merrily away, while he almost gasped in a bewilderment of pleasure. Tom and the other two had meanwhile not been emotionless ; by good or evil chance they had each been smitten by the loveliness of different maidens. Tom was altogether struck with a sprightly *danseuse*. The result was that the youths slept little that night, and the next evening saw them once more in that stage-box. Alas, for the vanity of human resolutions !

Let not the reader deem these proceedings iniquitous. They were the simple outcome of foolish youth, and bore no kinship to the inane proclivities of the jaded masher of to-day, or the propensities of the hoary prowler who lives on the remembrance of sin. Any ordinary, honest boys would probably have shared the fate of ours.

The plot rapidly thickened; for, with a start of jealous surprise, Henry suddenly observed one Jones, of Exeter, and Bailey, of Trinity, standing at one of the wings *behind the scenes*, and, what is more, chatting gaily with several of the company. This was indeed gall and wormwood, and his countenance betrayed his feelings, insomuch that Miss L'Eclair, while making one of her exits, shot towards him a most inviting glance, and beckoned him with a slight movement of the head to come behind.

It was enough, and, with agitated and beating hearts, our friends hurried out of the box, and away round to the stage-door. Cards were sent up to Mrs. Fortescue, a stout, comely lady, who had enjoyed her youth, and, somehow or other, they scrambled up the narrow stairs into the very cabined and confined regions of behind the scenes at the "Vic."

Very little indeed had Mrs. Fortescue to say to them, and they themselves were almost speechless with the exciting novelty. Presently Henry spies Miss L'Eclair, and makes towards her, stumbling over various paraphernalia, and jostled by the other members of the company. He reaches her, and she instantly says, "So glad you have come ; I knew you wanted to, last night. Didn't you, now ?"

Henry blushed and stammered. He was, to all intents and purposes, very young. Then she continued: "Isn't it an awful

place, this? no room to swing a cat in. I haven't even a dressing-room to myself, or I'd ask you there; but there are three or four of us in the only available one, and Molly Vere is so disagreeable; but why haven't you brought me some flowers? Look what beauties those other boys brought!"

And Henry observed, with rage, that she was in possession of flowers, the gift of Jones, of Exeter, and Bailey, of Trinity. He remembered little more that night, for the play was rapidly drawing near its close, and Miss L'Eclair bade him adieu, as she went to dress in the crowded room, where her maid and small dog were waiting for her. Tom Elliot had been tumbling over scene-shifters, and generally getting in the way, the upshot of which was he became desperately enamoured of the *danseuse*.

"At any rate," said Henry as they

departed hot and feverish, "we will be even with Bailey and Jones to-morrow."

By way of accomplishing this laudable object, he telegraphed first thing in the morning to one of the principal Covent Garden establishments :—"Send down hamper of choicest cut flowers and several first-rate bouquets."

The day wore on, and at about five o'clock the consignment of flowers arrives —and such flowers, too—enough to deck the whole company of over fifty persons. The bouquets were bewilderingly beautiful, and these were directed specifically to Mrs. Fortescue, Miss L'Eclair, and the other leading ladies—the cut flowers were simply sent *en masse* to the company, and were ready waiting long before the hour for that night's performance arrived.

The effect was immense. Tom and Henry again occupied the stage-box, and

viewed with joy how every being on the stage was bedecked. Miss L'Eclair looked charming, and carried Henry's bouquet over which she looked at him many times with the sweetest of mischievous eyes.

Presently the heroes of the hour went behind the scenes, and there were greeted with a medley of thanks, while Jones and Bailey lurked darkly and unfriended in a corner, unnoticed save when a scene-shifter told them to get out of the way. It was a triumph, and Jones and Bailey presently owned their defeat by lounging moodily away.

This was but the beginning of evils, for now came an unblushing period when the silly youths must needs see their charmers also by day, and to add propriety in semblance they even escorted Mrs. Fortescue along with the younger division—took them over the colleges, showed them Oxford gene-

rally, actually passed them into Magdalen Chapel on Sunday, entertained them at lunch—and, oh! what about the reading? Well, they had utterly forgotten that.

The appetite for making presents is a voracious one—*Vires acquirit eundo*—and Henry had by this time begun to purchase and lavish jewels on Miss L'Eclair, who received them at first with a little surprise, and then suggested that, though their stay at Oxford terminated with the Sunday, Bristol was not far off, and he might as well come along with them; and so he did, like a young fool, having first provided himself with as fine a diamond ring as Mr. Rowell, the High Street jeweller, could supply.

The day he started he got a letter from Beau, which, however, he thrust into his pocket without reading. What was any-

thing Beau could say as compared with the pleasures of this journey ?

Tom, being of more solid common sense than his cousin, contented himself with saying good-bye to the company, and then resumed his reading without very much difficulty.

But why prolong this somewhat unedifying story ? Suffice it, Henry grew more and more infatuated, while Miss L'Eclair, who was really not at all a bad sort, prevented him from doing anything utterly absurd. She was careful enough, in her way, this young lady, of her own reputation, and never once went into his hotel unattended.

She would have him to dine with her at that three or four o'clock meal common to the profession, and she would sing to him afterwards so bewitchingly that he would have done anything for her. Behind

the scenes at night it was very different from the old "Vic."—a good dressing-room, and no other people knocking about save the discreet maid, Alice.

How quickly that week flew by! Even Mr. Brown, the Manager, whom Henry was wont to entertain at breakfast and to drinks, regretted the end of that time; but the term was beginning, and Henry *must* go back. He had become almost as one of the company, knew all its little scandals, and helped to compose a serious quarrel, which resulted from the *danseuse* having disclosed that Miss L'Eclair was thirty-three years old; he had soothed the animosity subsisting between her and the lady who played "Lange"—and said Miss L'Eclair to him one day, when they were out for a long drive, "If you weren't so young, Henry, or if I were younger, I'd be really foolish enough to be in love with

you. Perhaps—perhaps, we'll meet at Scarborough, though." And Henry vowed to be at Scarborough, come what might.

At last the end came, and he had to depart gloomy and miserable to Oxford, thinking of the happy past and the horrid future with such a lot of reading to do, and so much time lost.

In the midst of these ruminations he pulled out of his pocket Beau's letter, which was dated a week back, as we have seen, but had not yet been opened. It ran thus :—

"Dear Henry,—The doctor says Dorothy is all right now, and can go to town, so Miss D'Aguilar is starting *to-morrow* with her and Mary. Dorothy wants to see Oxford again very much, and so they have decided to go there first, and

on to London after a day or two's rest. They will arrive by the 5 p.m. train.

"Will you see that there are good rooms ready for them at the Randolph?

"Yours, GAINSBOROUGH."

"Good heavens!" thought Henry, aghast. "They must have come the very day I left Oxford—and found that I had gone *after* I received this letter. Dorothy too! Oh, what have I done?"

CHAPTER IX.

"Hope told a flattering tale—
That joy should soon return;
Ah! naught my sighs avail,
For love is doomed to mourn."

Anon.

It was market day at Harrington, and as the afternoon wore on, the motley throng began to draw off from the open space into the public-houses.

Here and there they are loading small pigs into carts, netted over, and prodigious is the squealing of these swine as they are roughly lugged from the great inverted tubs wherein they have been posing for sale. Cattle are being driven off in divers

directions from the auction mart, and the many and various stalls whereon sundry goods have been sold are becoming deserted. The shooting-galleries still attract, and there is a constant flow of unsteady drivers, urging homeward their shabby old tax-carts at a pace which speaks to the hairy-heeled old farm horses too truly of potations.

Polly Stobbs has come to the market with her cousin Jenny, who has been visiting her of late, and they have been driven in by young John Harrison, who still continues his attentions to Polly, and still grows more unlike his old self every day.

He insisted on taking the girls into the Freethought Hall where Aspland was accustomed to hold forth, and they were presently engaged in looking first at the stage whereon was Aspland with several others, and then at the audience—a crowd

of gaping yokels chiefly, but containing a large number of sad-faced sceptics of a somewhat better class.

As the party entered, Aspland was just saying,—

"No, my friends, do not be deceived to your own hurt by this myth of a divine tyrant before whom you must grovel. I would have you recognize that you have in yourselves whatever you ought to respect, and that your responsibility for good or bad is to yourselves.

"Man, free and equal, is alone divine; and good and evil mean simply that which conduces to the happiness or sorrow of mankind. The idea of a Godhead has been forced on you by those who have taken advantage of your ignorance to debase and crush you. They have frightened you with the fiction of a devil, just as bad nurses terrify children into obedience by

threats of a bogey. It is thus, by a corrupt and narrow-minded priesthood playing into the hands of the aristocracy, that you have, for a while, been kept under ; but you are no children now, you are beginning to see through all that darkness, and in no long time you will be able to stand up in your might and say, 'The shams of privilege shall be no more, the terrors of religion are swept away, the servitude of priestcraft is shaken off, and the man does not live who shall dare to say he is above his fellows.'"

Aspland paused for breath, amid considerable applause ; and meanwhile Polly Stobbs, who was, to say the truth, horribly shocked at his words, gazed anxiously around, and her eyes fell on Andrew Jackson, one of the detectives, who, from the night of the duke's murder, had been investigating the case.

He had not seen her since the inquest, and he moved across to speak to her.

"Morning, Miss Stobbs."

"Good evening, you should say, Mr. Jackson."

"Ay, it is getting rather late. But what brings you here? Surely you can't come for pleasure among these blackguards?"

"Oh! I don't know; and as for blackguards—they seem to be good enough company for you!"

"Me! oh, no, I come on business; oh, I see, you have young John there, with you—that's why you come, is it? Well, he might take you to a better place."

By this time Aspland was carrying on an argumentative dialogue with a so-called Methodist minister, on the merits and demerits of Christianity. 'Tis a very common practice on the part of Aspland and

those who, like him, derive their living from professional Atheism, to put up some such ridiculous man of straw in order to knock him down. The thing is all pre-arranged, the good things to be said by Aspland, and the feeble ones by his adversary. It is a clever trick and tells amazingly.

But Jackson was taking no notice of the disgusting exhibition. He drew nearer to Polly, and without any apparent motive, except for conversation, began to talk once more of that dreadful night when the duke and her father were shot.

"Ay, Miss Stobbs, 'twas an awful time that; and I've ofttimes thought that but for this here Aspland there'd have been no such trouble. To think of you being there too!"

"Oh, don't talk of it, Mr. Jackson! After father left me and ran into the Black

Plantation I thought I'd have died—and then those shots, and—oh, it's too awful!"

And Polly almost broke down at the recollection.

"Yes, 'twas bad for you, poor lass! I almost wonder how you dared to go into the wood after that."

"I don't know, I can't tell, and then when I met John running with his gun, and didn't know him at first—"

"With his gun, did you say?"

Jackson looked sharply at her. Your detective always *will* overdo his part.

"With his gun! Did I say that? I must be silly; why, he had no gun. You know that."

Jackson moved off with a dissatisfied air; and an expression of intense horror for a moment came over Polly's face.

"Why, Polly, what's up?" said John,

who was now at her side, while Aspland was polishing off his argumentative adversary amid much applause.

She looked at him, half-shrinkingly.

"I—I don't know. I don't like this place. Let us go home."

"Old Aspland sounds a bit strong at first, but you'll be all right next time," and so they went.

Reaching the open air, Polly fairly gasped for breath; looked at John a long searching look—and then, knowing not whether she would cry or faint, begged to be taken to the inn.

"No," thought she to herself, "that cannot, cannot be; and yet, why was I so quick to deny he had a gun; and why have I never thought of it before when they were searching for a gun that had lost the broken hammer which was found near that spot? Ah, what am I

dreaming of? John! dear John! oh, how thankful I am he *did* throw his gun into the deep water, for who can tell what other folks might have said if he had been found there with it?"

The cloud which had shadowed over her mind for a little time was now quickly clearing away. She was a thoughtless girl, and fond of John; thus she soon forgot what she had been thinking of, and talked with him merrily as ever.

In the inn, where Polly and her friend were left by John, amid farmers' wives drinking hot gin-and-water and talking scandal, they had an opportunity of hearing that Aspland was organizing a body of what he called delegates, to go up to London in the summer and do—no one knew what.

"Leastways," said Mrs. Smith, "that's what our Amos told me. He says to me,

says Amos, while I was mending Libby's best silk skirt, which her father gave her last Martinmas—he says to me, 'Mother, I'm going to London.' 'What for, Amos?' I asks. 'Don't know, but I'm going; all exes paid, and old Aspland to show us about. There's more'n a hundred going, too.' And that's all I've heard tell about it; but if so be as the expenses is paid, why, the lads is in the right to go."

"Ay, that's what I say, Mrs. Smith," put in a showy young matron, named Jenks. "But my old man, he's that behind the times, he won't hear a word of it, and swears at Aspland that awful, I can't abide it. It's downright wicked; Aspland and the duke being such friends, too."

"That's what beats me!" cried Polly suddenly. "Why are Mr. Aspland and the duke so friendly?"

"Why, lass," answered Mrs. Smith, "they've got a mutual friend like—parson's wife—and she's brought 'em together."

There was a little ill-natured tittering at this remark, mild as it was, and what followed the girls never knew, for John at this moment came in to say their horse had been pricked in shoeing, and could not be driven. He had begged a ride home for one of them. Perhaps Polly would walk with him?

Polly was glad to do so, and off they set together. It was about five o'clock, and beginning to grow dusk; but it had been a beautiful spring day and the evening would be a charming one for a walk.

It so chanced that they took the old path along to the right, which led to the riverside, and where, some years before,

we saw Aspland and Mrs. Lee Fenwick.

Where the path first reaches it, the riverside is hidden by a wood from view, but we know that at this point the river courses along rapidly far down in its bed. The banks are rocky and precipitous, and the path tends somewhat dangerously along the top.

No one else had come by this route—the other was so much shorter—and when the two reached this secluded point, some few miles from Harrington, they sat down on an old log seat to rest, and gazed into the far hills opposite where nought was heard except the occasional tinkle of a sheep bell.

"John," said Polly, "you don't believe what that Aspland was saying, about there being no God, do you?"

John's arm was round her waist now.

"What matters to me, so long as I've got you, Polly?"

"Ah, but—if you hadn't me?—if you were dying—if you were to be shot like poor father—what about a God then!"

John was silent, then drew her closer to him, almost roughly, "Why, lass, it's no use thinking of such things. One might spend all day thinking, at that rate. I'm thinking now of nought but you; and that's plenty for any one."

She would have replied, but he stopped her with a kiss, and then she became indifferent to theological fancies; for she was by nature thoughtless, not to mention being fond of him.

The pretty little head nestled on to his breast, and the blue eyes looked trustfully up at him, as she said the simple words,—

"Dear old John."

He clasped her tighter still, and spoke

with all the arts of love; for John Harrison had not followed Aspland in vain; he was no shy yokel now. The mists were rising from the far side of the river, and in the distance the shouts of the revellers returning from market were less and less frequent, yet the strange lovers had not gone on their way; and as the moon rose, the shadows of the trees reflected in the waters below waved like mournful spectres in that ill-omened evening.

CHAPTER X.

AMANTIUM IRÆ.

"Here and there a cotter's babe is royal born
by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his
oxen or his swine."

Tennyson.

From the time when Henry had so unfortunately neglected Dorothy, owing to his not having read Beau's letter, he gave way to a stupid weakness in the matter. Instead of writing at once to explain as best he could, he simply kept silence, feeling safe while at a distance, a stupid, and somewhat contemptible trait in his character, resembling the well-known propensity of the ostrich; for, be it known, nothing was

further from his wish than to really slight Dorothy, yet he remained foolishly inert, and every day that passed rendered it more difficult for him to make his peace.

Many men have ere now become ostensible enemies for no better reason than that there has been something one of them has not at the first explained, and they have kept on cutting one another ever since.

It must not be thought that Henry was heedless of what he had done, but his was a nature which, when once absorbed in any given enterprise, seemed to have no scope for reflection on anything else. He was reading for his final schools in earnest now, and his whole mind was on that, until he was suddenly advised that on the twenty-first of May—three days distant—was Beau's coming of age, and his presence at home was absolutely necessary.

No way of shirking it, though he seriously

thought of doing so. An important occasion of the sort, on which all the country-side would be present, could not be avoided by so near a relative as Henry, and he fretted himself into many a cold perspiration at the thought of what he should say to Dorothy when he saw her—he who in a tacit sort of way had professed to love her, and yet had, on the first opportunity, gone shamelessly off with another.

'Twas an uneasy journey to Harrington this time, and a still more uneasy drive to the Park. No one but servants to meet him; this was in its way a relief. But when at last he entered the dear old castle, and found the ladies at afternoon tea with Beau domesticated among them, a courage either of despair or self-confidence came over him, and he greeted them as if nothing had happened, nor was one single allusion made to that fatal absence from Oxford.

There was not much to be said that day, for every one was busy, looking after preparations for the morrow, when the great celebration took place. Who can tell what prodigious culinary preparations were required; and how the aid of Mr. Trueman, of the Harrington hostelry, and divers cooks from afar had to be invoked? There were tents rising rapidly here and there, and all manner of indications of coming sport, such as the marking out of a course for pony races round the park, the inevitable croquet of that period, the witch's cavern, and so forth. Thousands of guests were expected, and it was believed that Beau's coming of age would surpass anything of the sort that had ever been seen.

Henry slept but ill that night. He had on him the consciousness of having done amiss, and fortunately for him that consciousness hurt him. A man is never very

far wrong when he can feel acutely his own faults. There was something almost maddening about meeting Dorothy in the old friendly way just as if nothing had happened, when he knew so well that he had done so much to estrange her from him, and that she must in her own mind be wondering when he would venture to explain himself. So he tossed and tumbled in his bed, and thought of the day when he had stood with Dorothy by the side of his dead father—how different from now!

But the morning dawned and the day wore on, and still he weakly deferred telling her of his faults, but pretended to busy himself with the preparations for the guests, and assisted his uncle, Lord Robert, and Beau to receive them in the afternoon.

What an afternoon! From all sides they came, arrayed all in their best. There was no one of the neighbourhood left out among

such as could by an indulgent urbanity be described as esquire. All these and their households were present, giving themselves no small airs, strutting this way and that, examining most minutely all they saw, and assuming an air of superiority to all their equals.

Among the lot was Aspland and several other ill-favoured friends of his, while, of course, Mrs. Lee Fenwick was there with the old vicar, her husband. Several notable guests had come to stay in the castle, but these were of no very great moment—none of the right sort, as Henry thought, for their names were simply suggestive of fast life rather than honest work.

Of course there was much greeting of Beau, and much applause when he made his speech, in which he said that he did not believe in the so-called sentimental relations of landlord and tenant, "an idea

which has been invented by the landlord to enslave the tenant's sympathy. No, let us have fair, business relations, not guided by old-fashioned fads or hysterical sentiments, but by the common-sense of men."

There were plenty there who heard this very uneasily—especially Henry—but no one could, of course, refrain from cheering the young duke.

The day passed on, and the majority of the guests had gone, while the chosen ones remained for the ball, which was organized with great magnificence in a vast tent on the lawn, with a perfect floor fitted for it. All that could be done in the way of first-rate music, admirable wine, and pretty people, was done, and the beautiful summer night permitted any amount of roving about among the old trees, and along even into the park.

Henry had danced with Dorothy once,

and had led her away, and tried his best to open the subject of his fault, but she gave him no encouragement—not a chance in fact to go on with it; and it seemed so strange that he who had known her all his life should be so frightfully shy with her now and simply tongue-tied. The music commenced again, and she was gone. Henry wandered along in moody silence till he came to a seat which ran all round one of the big trees, and sat himself down to ruminate.

What he thought of is of little moment; suffice it, his quiet was broken by voices on the other side of the tree; they were those of Beau and Dorothy, and Henry was too interested not to listen.

Beau had by this time fared a trifle well, which may be some excuse for the tone he adopted, but it certainly electrified Henry, who heard as follows:—

"I say, Dorothy, aren't you tired of this humdrum life?"

"Oh, I don't know. Why?"

"Well, it's so stupid, for a nice girl like you to be shut up here with old Miss D'Aguilar. There's no use being old-fashioned in these days; why shouldn't you take a run up to town just for a joke?"

"Beau! I don't think you know what you're talking about."

"Oh, yes I do; there's no harm, for I'd look after you—why, Dorothy dear, you don't know what a lot I think of you."

And here there was a pause. Then came a sounding smack on somebody's face, and the voice of Beau,—

"Damnation! How dare you do that—you, the daughter of a common Yankee, and God knows what mother!"

"My mother—"

"Was divorced, as perhaps you don' know."

This was too much for Henry, who did not, however, rush frantically on Beau as a man in a play would; he simply walked calmly round the tree, and confronting him, said quietly,—

"You d—d scoundrel!—I beg your pardon, Dorothy, but one must speak plainly."

Beau gasped a moment in amazement, then said, "Henry, what do you mean?"

"What I say."

"Oh, very good; you've been playing the eavesdropper, have you? Well, you have heard me tell Dorothy her mother was divorced; can you deny it?"

Dorothy looked wistfully at Henry, but a glance told her the cruel tale was true. Henry simply answered,—

"What does it matter? The record was pure till long after Dorothy was born,

and would have been till now had there not been another such as you in the world."

"Oh, come, I shan't stand any nonsense from you. I've heard of all your doings, my boy. It's well for you to be jealous of me now, but you've no right to poke your nose in when you cut poor Dorothy at Oxford, and ran off with Lucy L'Eclair."

Dorothy started here as if shot, and Henry drew back. She saw he would not meet her eye; but he spoke firmly still,—

"What I may have done is nothing, and in no way palliates your conduct. I've a right good mind to give you the thrashing you deserve, you cur. A pretty thing for England to have a duke like you!"

Beau smiled scornfully.

"It is no use talking here in this senseless fashion. You will understand that your belongings will be ready to depart

with you early to-morrow, and while I live you will not return here."

"Oh, all right; I'll not come near you; that you may take your oath of."

Dorothy was gazing at Henry in a perfect agony of anxiety, longing to rush to him and assure him of her sympathy, when Beau added,—

"Miss L'Eclair and you will find a home somewhere."

And Henry said nothing. Dorothy could not stand this; all her sympathies hardened. She cast one withering glance at Beau, and ran off to the castle, while Beau himself stalked moodily to the tent, leaving Henry to his own bitter reflections.

CHAPTER XI.

"Justum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ."—*Horace.*

Some few months had elapsed since the events last narrated. Henry had returned by an early train to Oxford, having done nothing to make his peace with Dorothy, and having effectually broken with his brother. Yet such was his peculiar character, that he was able to begin quietly reading for his final schools—then very close at hand—and, as it were, dismiss all other subjects from his mind.

What is more, he worked with such effect that he secured his first class pretty

easily, and "went down" for the last time amid a halo of congratulation, even from his old enemies, the dons. He could not go home; that was clear, either in country or town. He would have liked to know what Dorothy thought when she saw his honours in the paper—should he write to her and try to explain matters?—Ah! no; it was too difficult; things would, perhaps, come right in the end. So he had taken rooms in St. James's Place, just at the time when Mr. Lowe and the Adullamites had, through Lord Dunkellin's amendment, smashed up Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill—that magnificent measure which boiled down all the declamation about "unenfranchised millions" to a simple proposal to reduce the borough franchise from 10*l.* to 7*l.* rental!

All this while Mr. Disraeli was biding his time. He suffered himself in this

matter to be totally eclipsed by Mr. Lowe. Mr. Lowe was, for the time being, leader of the Opposition; but Mr. Disraeli's hands were free to deal with Reform himself, after the Adullamites had done the dirty work of turning out the Government.

Henry was now a member of the Carlton, thanks to his being brought forward by strong influence, and he had the good fortune to meet Mr. Disraeli there, the very day after the formation of Lord Derby's Cabinet was announced.

"I am glad to see you *here*," said the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. "I hope you will soon be translated to another and better political place."

"Place!" echoed Henry. "I am overjoyed to see you in it once more, Mr. Disraeli. I do hope, too, I may some time help you as a humble follower."

"You will never help me if you are

humble. You must believe in yourself—not in me."

Henry sighed. He had no great faith in himself at the moment—he an outcast, as it were, with 2000*l.* a year, it is true, but what was that for a man of his position?

"You don't look very hopeful," said Disraeli. "My dear fellow, no prospect should ever alarm you. You are young—that is everything, and I fancy you have courage; if you *have*, the world is at your feet. Look at us, on the other hand—Lord Derby a martyr to gout, sorely disinclined for arduous work, and I more than sixty. We have a majority against us in the House of Commons, for the 'Adullamites' (that's the only good title Bright ever invented), who voted against the late Government to show their independence, will vote against us to show the

purity of their motives. Things look black all round. The Fenians in Ireland and America are a serious danger, the cattle plague is still terrifying the agriculturalists, the failure of Overend and Gurney, with Black Friday and the suspension of the Bank Charter, has upset trade and business all over the kingdom; war has broken out between Prussia and Austria, the issue of which no one can foretell; and now we are face to face with a reform agitation which bids fair to play havock, though it slept peacefully when Liberals were in office. You think this is not a very pleasing situation? Ah, well, we have got to face it, and we *shall.*"

It was only then that Henry began to realize the immense difficulties of Government.

"I wonder," he murmured, half to himself, "how it is that any one will undertake such a position?"

"Difficulty is the very spice of true pleasure, and the noblest ambition is that which leads by the most arduous way."

* * * *

It was nearly a fortnight after this conversation that Henry, being now thoroughly imbued with the political excitement which ran very high in town, at least, so far as organization could make it, was considering anxiously what would follow on Mr. Spencer Walpole's refusal to let the Reform League use Hyde Park for a public meeting. You now very generally hear Mr. Spencer Walpole spoken of as a senseless being in that matter, whom all reasonable people knew to be wrong. In point of fact, he was at the time almost universally acknowledged to be right; even *The Times* said: "The Home Secretary exercised a wise discretion in prohibiting the use of the park for a demonstration in favour of reform." It was

rightly urged that the park was intended for the pleasure and recreation of all classes, and not for the hideous nuisance of a political mob.

But the occasion was a good one to attack a Conservative Government, and the principles of law and order. Mr. Bright,[1] for one, would not miss it. He wrote Mr. George Howell a letter, in which, among other things, he said,—

"You have asserted your right to meet on Primrose Hill and in Trafalgar Square. I hope after Monday next no one will doubt your right to meet in Hyde Park."

Having penned this deliberate incitement to outrage, the arch demagogue discreetly kept out of town,—

[1] Since those days Mr. John, as a staunch Unionist, has come to deserve much better of his countrymen.

With the cold caution of his patient spleen,
Which pens no treason till it seeks a screen ;
And keeps this maxim ever in the view—
What's basely done should be done safely too.

Then came the letters which passed between Mr. Walpole and Mr. T. Mason Jones, chairman of the league. No peaceful issue seemed possible, and London was in a fever of anxiety, while many of the more adventurous spirits betook themselves early in the afternoon to the Park to see what would come of it. Among these was Henry, who had clad himself in a shooting-coat and round hat for the occasion, and as he saw the police mustering till they must have numbered at least 1600, it seemed to him impossible that any mob could gain the ascendancy over them.

At five o'clock the park gates were closed, and Sir Richard Mayne had his

men, mounted and on foot, well on the alert to defend the place. Outside the Marble Arch, towards which Henry presently drew, an immense crowd of sight-seers had already collected—an amusing crowd, full of jokes and jests, nor in any way portentous of what should follow.

Thus an hour or two wore on, and men began to think nothing would come of it, but there was an anxious look on the faces of the police, and then suddenly—about seven o'clock—came the sound of music, drums and fifes, and down Oxford Street an immense advancing mob appeared in sight.

Whence they had come it matters not. Perhaps their chief gathering-ground was Clerkenwell Green, where, near the drinking fountain—of all places—one Coffey had spouted sedition to them from an

empty waggon, and their red-sashed leaders had marshalled them for the fray.

On they came, several cabs now at the head of the motley throng, these containing such worthies as Mr. Beales, Lieut.-Col. Dickson, and—yes, there was no doubt of it—Aspland. "These be your gods, O Israel!" thought Henry.

On they came, with tawdry banners waving, and here and there frantic gesticulations—one man in a hand-cart being especially notable, while a fiery Frenchman demonstrates to the utmost of his power the way they would manage this thing in France. The great seething multitude rolls up to the Marble Arch, scattering before it the idle on-lookers, and there is a period of suspense, while the police stand firmly in their ranks with determined faces, and the great gates frown impenetrable upon the "Reformers."

Now see Mr. Beales, Colonel Dickson, Aspland, and others of the leaders struggling forward to the gates to demand a parley.

"Why are we refused admission? by whose authority?"

The officer whom they ask goes in, and presently returns with his answer—"By the authority of the Commissioner of Police," and thereupon salutes and retires within the park, too late, however, to prevent an "ugly rush" of the mob, who try to carry the opened gate by storm. There is a sharp conflict. Staves are used freely by the police; the people are driven back—even the august Beales and the gallant Dickson are smitten; the gates are closed once more, and there arises a great howl of anger and execration.

It is ever the way of ambitious demagogues to shun hard knocks, and to shirk

the dangers into which they thrust their ignorant dupes. Thus, the ardour of Beales and Dickson being quickly cooled, they began to think Trafalgar Square were a safer and a better place; and incontinently hie thitherwards with the more weak-kneed of their brethren. Aspland alone of the leaders remains. He has not been hit as yet, and is valiant in the extreme.

And now again there is a pause while the great mass of human beings rushes backwards and forwards outside the rails seeking for some entrance, and the police, drawn up in long line, face the multitude calm and motionless. The scene is one of intense excitement, for it is evident that the people don't mean to retire easily. There are assembled here the very scum and dregs of the London population—none of your genuine working men, but the

"roughs" pure and simple; and as Henry looks at the long, thin line of police, he half trembles for the issue; but then the railings are stout iron ones—what need is there for fear?

He draws closer up to have a good look at the people; he is now near to the railings facing the Bayswater Road, and marks with something like dismay the evil countenances clustering close outside.

Ah! who is that, right up against the railings?—John Harrison, by all that's wonderful!

"Good heavens, John, you here?" cries Henry.

"Yes; and you'd best clear out, my lord, for we'll soon be there," pointing to where Henry stood.

Henry gazed in amazement—bewilderment one might say; and then suddenly by some evil chance John Harrison laid

hold of the railings and shook them. "Great Jupiter!" he cried, "they will give way!" and hurled himself with his full strength against them. At the first sign that the railings were giving, as by an electric touch, the idea of crushing them down was communicated to the mob, and, in the twinkling of an eye, not one, but a hundred yards fell down, and, like a black torrent bursting over a dam, the unsightly herd swarmed in—John Harrison the very first of them.

Henry had drawn back to let the police come up, and at first the furious rush was stemmed. Truncheons cracked ominously on close-cropped skulls, and it seemed the powers of order would gain the day.

'Twas but a moment, for now, here, there, and everywhere, the rails were crashing in, all along Park Lane; from

the Marble Arch to Grosvenor Gate every barrier is down, and almost everything between the Grosvenor and Stanhope Gates. In vain the police rush from place to place. They cannot defend so extended a line; they are driven back, contesting every inch of the ground, not unhurt some of them—one, named Penny, having an iron bar thrust into his side. Brickbats and stones fly in profusion at them, and still the mob come rolling up in greater numbers, magnificent samples of the unenfranchised!

Henry, who was standing near poor Penny when he was injured, has possessed himself of his staff, for truly some weapon is needed in such a throng, and though he has no desire to hurt a soul, he has equally little desire to be hurt.

Aspland has by this time had his courage greatly cooled. He has at first urged the

people on with frantic waving of a long stick, his red sash streaming wildly behind him, and his hideous countenance looking more demoniac than ever. Henry actually saw him hurl a large stone at the police, and then one of the officers cracked him sharply on the head, and he immediately shut up like a cur, sneaked off to another part of the conflict, and pretended to be trying to pacify the people and draw off the attack.

Henry was following him with no little interest; and presently Aspland caught his eye.

"Oh, Lord Henry!" he cried. "Do assist me in quieting this disturbance. It is terrible—it must not go on."

"Mr. Aspland," shouted Henry loudly, "you want to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, do you? Why, you must be a GOVERNMENT SPY!"

The last words he gave at the very top of his voice, and instantly the surrounding ruffians set on Aspland, and fairly stripped him, treating him for all the world like a Welsher, while Henry went off chuckling.

But now the police are being fairly overcome, and Henry comes upon one scoundrel in the act of throwing a great stone at Sir Henry Mayne—a valiant feat truly, considering that Sir Henry is seventy years of age. It is too late to stop the stone, but not too late to give the thrower a blow on the head which fells him like a bullock. Henry rushes, half alarmed, to pick up his fallen foe, when he sees to his consternation that it is John Harrison. The fellow is none the worse really, and he scowls at Henry with a look of terrible hatred, while one or two stalwart police seize him and drag him off a prisoner—one of about a hundred they have secured, and Henry remains

with the pleasant knowledge that he has been the means of doing this bitter damage to his old playfellow.

But there is little time to think. The mob careers wildly over the park, tearing up trees and flowers in wanton folly; ramping and roaring like the horrid many-headed beast it is. A company of the Grenadiers arrives, but only manœuvres, and the people cheer them; the police are beaten. Speeches are now made. Harriet Laws orates. De Gruythe, Cuthbertson, and Tompkins preside at different places. A deputation of six persons is to be sent to order her Majesty to dismiss Lord Derby. Beales is a hero, though he *did* run away. The triumph of *sansculottism* has arrived, and thus by ten o'clock the monstrous rabble melts away to its respective dens.

CHAPTER XII.

"Chaos, cosmos! cosmos, chaos! once again, the sickening game;
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name."

Tennyson.

Truly London was never more perturbed than by these Hyde Park riots. It is the most utter fabrication to represent, as is often represented now, that the closing of the park to political meetings was the act, or had the approval, of only one party.

On the contrary, Mr. Gladstone was with the Government in principle; and, long ere this, the opinion of Sir Alexander Cockburn, Sir R. Bethell, and Mr. Willes had been pronounced, and could be referred to now

as proving Mr. Walpole to be correct in point of law. Lord Granville even went so far as to say in the House of Lords, "I believe that these monster meetings are valueless," and he argued further, that if ministers had no legal power to prevent such meetings in the park, how did they justify any of their acts of control—such as shutting the gates at night, regulating Rotten Row, preventing cricket, &c.?

In point of fact, we had not in those days become sufficiently advanced to lend official encouragement to disorder. The Hyde Park rioters were a terror alike to both parties.

Henry had seen the end of the business on the previous night; he had even journeyed to Trafalgar Square, but arrived too late to hear Beales orating, or to see the excellent young men who sat on the statue of Charles I., and pointed ominously

at his head amid the applause of their fellows. Yet all the same, a motley throng still hung about, some engaged in hooting at the Carlton, others in cheering the Reform.

The police seemed fairly exhausted, and it is impossible to say what might not have happened, had not the mob's appetite for destruction died out for the night.

Only for the night ; since in the morning they were soon at it again, tearing up what remained of flowers and shrubs in the park, levelling the rails still more completely—dancing, howling, and cursing ; a second Carmagnole it might almost seem. Would a reign of terror set in ?

Mr. Disraeli did not know the meaning of fear ; perhaps he did not deem the danger great, still he echoed the thoughts of many hearts when he said in the House, "I live close to the spot where the disturbances

have occurred, and I am not quite sure that I shall get home in safety to-night, if indeed by this time I have a home to go to."

No, Mr. Disraeli had no fear, for he went on to boldly state that the rioters were not specimens of the British working man, but were the very "scum and refuse" of the people.

This second day witnessed many charges at Marlborough Street Police Court, and a tolerably good list of punishments. Henry went down to try what he could do for John Harrison, whom he felt sure Aspland had misled. Upon his representations as to the excellent character of John and all his family, Mr. Knox dismissed the case, simply requiring the defendant to find one surety besides his own to be of good behaviour. Henry agreed to do the needful at once, and very soon he walked out of the court with John.

The latter scowled at him, and looked not a little surly.

"Now, look here, John," said Henry, "I'm sorry I hit you on the head yesterday. I didn't know it was you; but I'm sure you deserved all you got. Now do, pray, get off home, and get out of all these disreputable associations."

"It's well for you to say so, with your big fortune for doing nothing; but the people must be served, and sitting still won't do any good."

"You don't mean to say you think pulling down park railings will do the people any good?"

"Yes, I do."

"What?"

"It has alarmed our tyrants."

"Tyrants! What hallucination is this? Why, John, you used to have some sense and now that man Aspland has made a fool of you."

"Fool!—yes; I'm a fool when I say what doesn't suit your book; a wise man when I defer to the traditions and customs which your order has selfishly enforced. Bah! We'll soon see who is the fool."

And John Harrison smiled bitterly.

"Well," continued Henry, "at all events you can't complain of tyranny where you were born."

"Even if I couldn't, it would make no difference; but I can. There's your brother raising his rents all round, even father's. Farmers that have improved the land most have to pay all the more for its present value. Yes, your precious brother—tyrant indeed;—but we'll teach him differently."

"I'm sorry if my brother has done what you say; but that's no reason why you should come up to town and throw paving stones about. Now be off with you, and take my advice, go to church next Sunday, and try to amend your ways."

John Harrison laughed aloud this time.

"Really, Lord Henry, you must indeed take me for a fool to think that I should ever debase myself by attending the obsolete ceremonials of an effete superstition."

"Oh, very well; go to the devil, then, if you prefer it."

"Devil! as if such a being existed!"

"Then go to Bath—Jericho—anywhere out of my sight!"

So ended this curious conference. John Harrison stalked moodily off to the purlieus of Soho, there to brew sedition with his choice associates. Henry walked towards club-land, and arrived at the Athenæum just in time to find that its windows had all been smashed by the brutal and purposeless mob.

The park had by this time been made to look as if an invading army had advanced

over it; the police entirely failed to cope with the roughs, and the Guards had to be kept in readiness.

All the afternoon did the riots go on, the rioters arming themselves with stones and rails, and refusing to obey the half-hearted exhortations of their knavish leaders, Colonel Dickson, Messrs. G. Brooke, and Mason Jones, to leave the park. One poor victim of their violence was a boy of fourteen years of age, who was carried to St. George's Hospital dead—a worthy result of the mob's brutality!

And on the morning of the third day there was little sign of amendment. There was absolutely little left to damage in the park, yet did the valiant reformers seek ceaselessly for further mischief, even approving their valour against a fine old tree which they incontinently burned. Still the spirit of evil rages, still they must find

something to injure. Some unwise persons have ventured to ride in the Row, logically enough, of course; for what do the reformers mean at all if they do not mean that the park is for the public to use in any way? Howbeit, riding is evidently an excluded pastime, and riders, male and female, are unmercifully stoned, and escape with some difficulty.

Then it is noted that there are persons driving. Can this be borne by a free and enlightened proletariat? Perish the thought! At once they march in imposing array down the carriage-drive. All must give way before them; none may pass them from behind.

A well-appointed coach, with a splendid team of chestnuts, apparently heedless of the position, comes smartly along from the rear of the mob, and the coachman thinks to scatter them by shouting "Hi, hi!"

as he approaches, and cracking his whip.

Instantly arms are locked together across the road, and the leaders are brought up sharp by the serried ranks of the people, while it is with great difficulty the coach is stopped in time to prevent a serious accident.

The driver loses his temper—swears, cracks his whip over the plunging horses, and appears to be about to lash the dirty countenances which are opposing him so ominously.

"You filthy *canaille*," he shouts, "clear the way, or by G—— I'll run over you!"

The lady by this time is evidently growing terrified, and his servants are down at the horses' heads.

"Pull him down!" shouts some one in the mob.

Then, as if by one impulse, there is a

rush of some scores of ruffians at the imprudent coachman. He hits at them savagely, his face livid with passion; but he might as well try to oppose Niagara. Up they come, scrambling; and in a few instants he is down struggling among them, while more than one heavy kick of hob-nailed boots is heard. One futile policeman rushes on the scene, but he, too, is knocked down at once close by the other prostrate form, and a savage howl goes up as of wild beasts tearing their prey in pieces.

At this minute Henry, who had come in from Albert Gate, saw the crowd and ran to ascertain what was amiss. "What is it; what is it?" he asked the first man whose eye he caught.

"Oh, they're giving the bobby a real proper dressing!" answered the man.

The crowd was so dense here that Henry could not see what was happening, but he

could hear the blows and the kicks, and he determined to do what he could to save the victim.

Sometimes, on an emergency, action is taken as if by inspiration; certainly in this case he never paused to form any plan, but putting his head down, went boring away almost unnoticed into the heart of the crowd just as a football player makes his way at times into the centre of a scrimmage.

Presently, bending low down, he came upon the prostrate policeman—who was conscious enough still, though battered by hob-nailed boots in the most sickening fashion.

The poor fellow started when Henry touched him; but, at the whispered word, "a friend," he lay still.

Feeling around him, Henry now found the man's truncheon, and slipped it into

his hand, then himself secured the rattle; and made his way back out of the crowd as rapidly as he could, while the policeman, prostrate as he was, laid about him with right good-will, and created something of a diversion.

No sooner was Henry clear of the crowd than he sprang the rattle, and kept hard at it for fully half a minute. The suddenness of the act—the terror of the well-known sound—struck the curs who were doing this brutal deed with a panic. They fled wildly in every direction, while some dozen or more of police came running up from various quarters.

Then, and not till then, did Henry see that there was another form on the ground besides that of the policeman. He noted now, too, the drag, with the trembling horses. Hastening up to see who this other victim was, he fairly reeled with astonishment.

"Good God! Beau; is it you?"

"I suppose so, though I daresay I'm tattered out of recognition. Those devils have knocked half my ribs in, I fancy; but let's be off before they come back."

Looking up at the drag once more, Henry saw on the box-seat Mrs. Lee Fenwick. Even then he thought of what Dorothy told him at Ascot; but time pressed. Beau and the policeman were put inside the coach, Henry mounted the box, the police formed a guard so far as they could, and thus slowly the horses made their way through the now re-gathering crowd. Henry spoke not a word to his companion; it was indeed no time for words. Not a few stones whizzed past their heads, and their small escort was sorely beset. All up Piccadilly the mob gathered, howling and roaring in the rear of them. Yet Henry managed to pull up

safely at Beau's new house in St. James's Square, and the two injured ones were quickly got into it. Henry, who had got down from the box, was about to follow, when Beau spoke—feebly enough: "I told you never to come inside my doors again;" and Henry went out with a bitter feeling at his heart, but something like a tear in his eye.

He had only just made his way to King Street, for though Beau's house was now strongly guarded, the crowd was in the square in great numbers, when some one shouted, "That's 'im as sprung the rattle," and Henry became aware at once that he was, as it were, a quarry, pursued by hundreds of insatiate foes.

Most people would run for it under the circumstances, and he did; but not knowing London so very well, ran straight down St. James's Place, turned to the right, and

found himself in a *cul-de-sac.* What was he to do? The pursuers were close at hand. The door of No. 17 stood open, and he simply bolted in, banging the door after him.

He paused in the hall, uncertain what to do. The people had seen him go in, and were raging outside. Presently, crash, crash—they were breaking the windows! Crash, crash—what terrible havoc! No one came on the scene, and Henry stood irresolute.

The destruction of glass goes on for full ten minutes, then there is a rush outside—the police have appeared on the scene, and the valiant glass-breakers flee back the way they came, and all is still.

Henry finds his heart beating very fast—and still he does not know what to do; at last, as no one appears, he opens that front door—it is Lord Elcho's house—and

as he steps out into the street he sees that seventeen great panes of glass are broken.

"I must put this right with Elcho somehow," he mutters, "but I won't face him now," and he walks cautiously off to the secure retreat of the Carlton.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

* * * *

Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?"

Shakespeare.

Once more the scene shifts to Trueman's Hotel in Harrington. It is market day, and the bar is well filled; there is any amount of gossip flying about. Confused and garbled accounts of the proceedings in London have obtained currency, and especially it is declared that John Harrison, alone and single-handed, tore down the park railings and defied the police; while the Duke of Countryholm on the

subsequent day defied the mob and routed them after a desperate conflict.

"They do say," remarked Trueman, filling up two more "drops" of gin, "that Lord Henry was there too; but no one knows rightly which side he's on—he's a strange lad."

"Ay," muttered Macvay, "and Miss Dorothy's been a strange lass ever since he left home. Wonder what made her take to living at old Squire D'Aguilar's!"

"Oh!" remarked one of the Bolingbroke Park keepers, "his Grace was a little too forward, and she didn't like it."

"Quite right too," said Trueman, "it's a pity some others wouldn't put these forward young chaps down in the same way. Look at poor Polly Stobbs—thinks John Harrison 'll marry her! Poor lass, poor lass!"

"Ah!" said the keeper, "that there John Harrison is a real bad 'un; and I read as how he'd 'a' been locked up if it hadn't 'a' been for Lord Henry."

"Splendid fellows, Beales and his men!" exclaimed a disciple of Aspland.

"Splendid fellows!" ejaculated Trueman. "I call them d—d scoundrels, and liars as well. Why did they go placarding about that Mr. Walpole had given 'em leave to meet Monday, when they knew he hadn't done anything of the sort? Why, even that there Holyoake backed out from among them after that!"

"How does Walpole know what he said?" asked the Aspland disciple. "Why, he was that upset he blubbered and roared like a bairn."

"Stuff and nonsense!" replied Trueman; "Walpole knows what he's about, and if he can't abide to see folks fighting

end over end for no reason, it shows he's a good sort, that's all."

"Oh, you always stand up for the landlords!" sneered the Aspland man.

"Not a bit of it; I think the duke's a real bad one, and that something will have to give way; but I don't hold with folks pulling up railings when they should be pulling down rents. Well, now, I'll just have a toothful of whisky myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

"In short, so well I've learnt to fast,
That sooth, my love, I know not whether,
I might not bring myself at last
To—do without you altogether."

Moore.

The brief remarks in the foregoing chapter have shown that Dorothy had naturally left Bolingbroke Park after Beau's insulting conduct. She had lived there so many years as to become almost one of the family, but now it was all different. She had written to her father in America at once, and for the time being gone to old Squire D'Aguilar's, whose niece Jenny was almost as great a friend of hers as Lady Mary.

Dorothy was in many ways very unhappy, and the change to this quiet house did not make her forget her troubles. The old squire would sit and prose away about the commonplace events of the neighbourhood. He was very old, indeed, now, and perpetually repeated himself; and Jenny had been kept so constantly at home that she was not altogether entertaining.

What had become of Henry? Since he went away after that terrible night with the accusation of a liking for Miss L'Eclair remaining undenied, Dorothy had heard nothing of him. She had often written to him, but had never sent the letters; such is the effect of pride, to which most of us become martyrs at times.

Had any one told Dorothy she actually loved Henry, she would have angrily denied it, but the loneliness of her position made her think about him—at least that

was how she accounted for her state of mind.

Dorothy, it must be remembered, was amply well provided for, and practically independent; indeed, her father had developed into a millionaire; but, like most Americans, he thought only of business; and to do him justice, he felt that his daughter was better where she was—or where he thought she was—than with him; he sent her all the money she could possibly want, and so imagined he did his duty.

But this was a sombre, dull life in the old brick house; and Henry was nowhere near.

It was on a very charming summer day that Dorothy went strolling out into the village, as was her wont, to do any little good she might; and at one cottage or another she heard that Polly Stobbs was ill—"Not ill, maybe," said the woman who

told her, "but moping;" and forthwith she walked briskly on towards the quiet valley where was the little cottage she knew so well.

Nor was it long before she arrived there, and once more found old Mrs. Stobbs performing her eternal knitting at the door, to whom Dorothy bade good day, and inquired after the daughter.

Mrs. Stobbs replied by asking her to be so kind as to step inside, and there she found Polly seated in a rocking-chair, looking dull and careworn, almost sullen rather than glad to see a visitor.

"Why, Polly!" said Dorothy, "I'm so sorry to find you ill. What's the matter?"

"Nothing, thank you, Miss Dorothy, I'm quite well."

"She do always say that," interposed the mother; "but she won't do nothing but sit there all the same; I'm getting

fairly out of patience with her," and the old woman bounced out of the house to attend to her poultry.

"You seem low-spirited, Polly, at all events," said Dorothy. "Wouldn't you like to walk out into the air; it is such a glorious day?"

Polly said nothing; but burst into tears.

Dorothy was astonished, but thought this ebullition simple weakness. She rose, and walked to the girl's side; laid her hand gently on her shoulder, and tried to calm her. While doing so she glanced at the newspaper lying in her lap, and caught sight of the name "John Harrison."

"Why, what's that wretched John Harrison been doing?"

Polly flushed scarlet; and then replied hotly, "No harm, Miss Dorothy, that I'm certain of; but oh! when will he come back?"

"Ah! I see now, John Harrison has gone up to London on this fearful rioting business, and you, Polly—are you engaged to him?"

"Ye—es, Miss Dorothy."

"Well, he'll soon be back; and you'll prevent him ever being so foolish again, won't you?"

"Oh, I don't know—I don't know!" and Polly once more burst into hysterical sobs.

Dorothy could make nothing of her, and eventually left her to the by no means tender mercies of her mother. Walking on from there, almost by habit towards the Harrison's house, she came upon young Charles Harrison hard at work in one of the hay-fields.

Dorothy felt instinctively that Charles Harrison was interested in what she had seen; so she stopped and spoke to

him, while he leaned half-sheepishly against a stile.

"Good morning, Charles," she said. "I've just been seeing poor Polly Stobbs; she seems dreadfully low in her spirits."

"Yes, miss," said Charles, fidgetting with his cap.

"Do you know what's the matter with her?"

Charles Harrison blushed scarlet, then heaved a long sigh,—

"I believe, Miss Dorothy, she's fond of our John."

"And he?"

"Has gone to London with that Aspland. Goodness knows what he'll do, or when he'll come back; and I don't think he cares much about Polly, and—and—"

"You do, Charles?"

Again did Charles Harrison hang his head, and look sheepish.

"Ah! well, it will be all right; she will find out presently who is the better worth loving. You will have the best of it at the last."

"Ah! but, Miss Dorothy, you don't know how fine-spoken John is since he was with that Aspland, and I'm but a rough chap. I know I care more for Polly than he does; but he can talk better, and so she thinks nothing about me."

"Dorothy was inwardly smiling at all this. Why should she be made the *confidante* of these rustics? Reason or none, we only chronicle what happened, and, perhaps, it shows how nearly the classes on the Bolingbroke estate were brought together in that most admirable of communions, when there is perfect frendship and perfect respect.

What a strange sight it was to see

Dorothy, an American girl, brought up in a most ducal household, thus receiving the confidence of a farmer's rough son! Strange, but true, and fraught, in some degree, with meaning for the future; for Dorothy had formed her own idea of the situation, and had a liking for Charles, as being an honest man.

"Do you really care very much about Polly?" she asked.

He blushed and stammered, then said, "Yes," and looked another way.

"Well, now, take my advice, and don't think any more of her for a while; you just work hard at whatever you have got to do; forget her; it will be better for you;" and so she left him, half amazed, and wondering in himself what manner of advice this might be.

CHAPTER XV.

"Beatus ille qui procul negotiis,
Ut prisca gens montalium,
Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
Solutus omni fœnere."

Horace.

THERE is a mysterious influence about London, which makes us spend money. In vain do people reason beforehand—you can get the best of everything, and the cheapest in London; so you can, with the exception of beef, mutton, and eggs, which are monstrously dearer than elsewhere; but there is an insensible drain on the purse which is very familiar to dwellers in town. What it is no one can tell. Perhaps cab fares, perhaps theatres, per-

haps—but there, it's no use speculating, the thing is certain, be the cause what it may.

And Henry very soon began to experience this pleasant diminution of resources.

He was at the time of life when one goes everywhere, and does everything. £2000 a year is a nice sum for a youth to deal with, but it does not go very far if you really make the pace hot.

There are always a lot of hangers-on about town who are practically penniless, and ever on the look out for the youth with money; and one of these, Johnson McAndlish, a magnificent man in all appearance, and well known to all good people, very soon singled out Henry as a likely sort. Somehow or other they were introduced, and then came pigeon-shooting card-playing, and goodness knows what, Henry of course losing. There is no

reason to suppose McAndlish did not act fairly, but it is certain that hotel proprietors were in the habit of letting him live gratuitously with them on account of the business he introduced. He was the best of all good company; a rare sort indeed, if he had only been blest in worldy gear; but a screw loose somewhere when the pinch came.

Around this man were several younger ones, who served no ostensible purpose; for they were palpably hard up and by no means interesting, yet they remained, and Henry came to know them all. How he came into this society he could least of all have told himself. The fact was, he was utterly idle and careless, and the society prepared itself to receive him, just as a conjuror prepares to force a card.

It will surprise no one that, being among these people, Henry soon began to

get hard up, and the position was one he had never till then realized. The great McAndlish soon found this out.

"Hard up, my dear fellow! Hard up! *You* hard up!" And he laughed consumedly."

Henry gazed at him.

"Well, you *are* an innocent! Come along with me to old Marks; he'll let you have as much as you like."

Henry had some sort of dislike for this sort of thing, but weakly followed, and found Mr. Marks in his Jermyn Street office—a one-eyed Hebraic gentleman, who received him kindly.

"Lord Henry Bolingbroke, Marks," said McAndlish. "You know his position, doubtless; you know everything. Now just fork out some coin."

"Of course, of course," said Mr. Marks. "I am delighted to assist

you, Lord Henry. How much shall it be?"

"Oh, say fifty."

Mr. Marks threw up his hands deprecatingly.

"My dear fellow," cried McAndlish, "take my advice, and stick Mr. Marks for as much as you can while he's in the humour. He is not always so accommodating. Give him £500, Marks."

"With pleasure," said Mr. Marks.

Henry, in his innocence of heart, thought there was no harm in having the money, so without more ado signed the promissory note for the amount, and received a trifle over £450 in cash, never troubling to count it. That night he played écarté and lost very heavily.

Somehow or other, this life in town necessitated other visits to Mr. Marks. Miss L'Eclair was back now, playing at

the Opera Comique, and he had by no means lost sight of her. Rather he seemed to have lost sight of himself so far as any good object was concerned.

Beau, of course, could make a good show in town, and Henry was determined always to do the like. Driving, riding, shooting at Hurlingham, betting, and otherwise disporting himself, he passed the time rapidly ; and Dorothy seemed only as some beatific vision of a happy past.

And as time passed his relations with Mr. Marks became more cordial and confidential.

"Now, my Lord," said Marks one day, when Henry had visited him on the usual errand, "it seems to me that as your financial adviser, if you'll allow me to call myself so, I shouldn't allow you to lose money in this way without seeing that it's got back."

"Excellent man! Arrange that by all means."

"Well, look here. I've just bought a property in Essex—1700 acres—dirt cheap for £14,000, and there is a fortune to be made if it be properly farmed. You know, my Lord, how farmers have muddled properties lately?"

"Certainly I do, but what of this?"

"Well, I propose that you should go into it with me. I let you have half at £7000, you charging your income and reversion for that amount. It will need an insurance policy to make all safe; and then I feel sure all I have ever lent you will come back naturally and easily."

"I am really very much obliged to you, Marks; but are you sure this is good business?"

"Do you think I should have bought the land myself if it hadn't been?"

"No, I don't. All right; I'm on."

And so Henry became possessed of half the manor farm of Warlaby, in Essex, which was of the most hopeless character, having ruined all its preceding tenants. In point of fact, Mr. Marks had only obtained an agreement for the purchase of it; he had not paid down one farthing, except a £2000 deposit, and that he paid in "Chichester" bonds.

The remaining £7000 he financed through Henry, and this made up £9000, which was really the sale price.

Now commenced a "bleeding" period. All manner of things had to be done for this farm, and all sorts of expenses incurred. Marks found the money, or said he did, and the ever-increasing account was kept discreetly back. Meanwhile, Henry had developed some interest in the place—had been down there once or twice,

and had been discreetly misinformed by those who were looking after it as to the prospects. "I tell you what, Marks," he said, one day, "I think I understand this farm better than you do; I wish I had it all myself; you have too much else to do."

"Very well, my lord, you shall have my half for cost price—£7000."

"Well, that's very fair, I must say; how shall I arrange the money?"

"Oh, the same as before. Charge your income and reversion, and effect an insurance policy."

So it was done, and the manor farm of Warlaby became Henry's.

Very happy and very pleased was he with it; for he attributed all ill-success up to then to previous bad farming; and in one sense it did him good, for he stayed a good deal out of town in the old farmhouse with the hind, lived on plain fare,

took lots of exercise, and enjoyed the rudest health.

But in due course he found at his town address a document from Marks, demanding payment of £9575, and stating that a settlement was absolutely necessary.

Proceeding hastily to the office of the Jewish man, Henry asked him hotly what the d—l it meant; and was answered softly and amiably, "Well, my Lord, you see there's the sums you had before, and there's your share of the money spent in improvements; these make up the amount. I'll go through every item if you doubt me; but there's no need to make this a cash matter now the farm is going on so well. I'll take a mortgage from you for it, and that will settle all without trouble."

Of course it was settled on this basis.

What fools boys are! The end was not yet. Again Henry wanted money, and

again he went to Marks, McAndlish being there. He had accustomed himself to go in for larger sums now, so spoke of £1000.

"No, my Lord; I am carrying out a large transaction or nothing to-day. If I give you £1000, I can't manage the former; so if you want anything from me it must be £5000 at least."

Needless to say Henry agreed, though he was sorely astonished to find that he got as £2000 of his money a two-year-old colt in training at Epsom, and three pictures as representing £1500 more. He rebelled at this at first, but McAndlish and sundry others assured him he had a rare bargain; and then came some wine and cigars, and a balance of cash, in security for all of which he gave another mortgage on the manor farm of Waralby.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Armorumque Ingruit horror."—*Virgil.*

The winter of '66 was an anxious one in many ways for the country. Stephens and his Fenians were at work, and all manner of schemes were afloat, though fortunately the Government, better informed than are our rulers to-day, were ready for all movements, notably, for instance, when the contemplated capture of Chester Castle melted into nothing before the apparent vigilance of the authorities.

But beyond all this the Reform agitation was going on, and the competition of crowds and mobs was in full swing. The voice of the streets had been invoked by the wire-

pullers of the Liberal party, and of course it had answered as it always will when there is any prospect of gratuitous refreshment and suggested rapine.

Beau, meanwhile, quietly at Bolingbroke Park, had been living wholly at his ease. He had by this time thoroughly imbibed Radical doctrines. Probably a man of Aspland's calibre would never have got hold of him on this or any other point; but the devilish device of employing a woman to win him insensibly to the cause of evil had succeeded only too well. Mrs. Lee Fenwick was not clever in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but she had managed to get Beau into her toils, and Aspland was a skilful prompter. Perhaps nothing of this sort would have availed had the young duke not been so utterly spoiled previously by priggish schoolmasters and pedantic dons—men

who, in the narrowness of their paltry minds, think that scepticism and Radicalism are the tokens of intellect rather than the acme of human folly.

But having thus imbibed Radical and Atheistical principles, the Duke of Countryholm was very far from working out the programme which Aspland had in his mind. It had occurred to Aspland that a Radical duke must needs apportion his land out amongst the poor, though all the while he was for ever clamouring that land should be treated commercially, and wholly stripped of all sentimental circumstances.

Beau thought so too. Land should be dealt with as an ordinary mercantile commodity, entirely on the Manchester or Birmingham principles. Supply and demand are the twin gods of the Cobdenite Radical, and on that basis alone, thought he, should land be regulated.

So it came about that at the rent audit for the last half of '66 Beau made a speech, which also made a sensation. He told his tenants that for his part he had come to the conclusion that a great deal was lost by want of business-like arrangements. They had for a long time been accustomed to live on in a humdrum fashion, paying a small rent; but all these ideas of landlord and tenant being bound together in any other way than shopkeeper and shopman were so much moonshine. For his part, he should be business-like first and friendly afterwards. In order to put everything on a proper basis, he had caused each one of them that day to be served with a notice to quit, so that he might next rent day adjust the rents of the estate at their true value.

It is strange that after all Aspland's teaching of Beau the result should have been so entirely at variance with what one

would anticipate from a Radical; but circumstances alter cases, and the man who will bellow for distribution of property while he is impecunious, will be cruelly commercial when he succeeds. His Radicalism makes him the worst of all landowners, for he is unable to see that the laws of supply and demand are not infallible.

Yes, Beau had given vast offence. The family had ever been associated with the soil since some long-forgotten day, and never, so far as any one knew, had one of them tried to arbitrarily raise the rents; there were complaints throughout all the country-side.

Aspland, who had returned from his London escapades, marked the effect of his teaching, and also that the result was to put the pupil wholly at variance with the people; yet, after all, he had thought

most of securing the duke's influence for the election, and had barely speculated on the consequences which might follow on a duke proving a Radical.

Dr. Towler, who in his way, was as great a toady as you need wish to see, was on a visit to Bolingbroke Park, and amid the other young and gayer people he was able to see more of Miss D'Aguilar. Certainly these two got along excellently well, whether it was that the lady was tired of her present position, or that the gentleman was platonically amorous. Beau declared one night in the smoking room that he believed there was some likelihood of a match between the two; whereat Tom Elliott laughed consumedly, but those who had watched were not suprised.

It was about 12 p.m., and the men, of whom the late Lord Aylesford was one, were vastly hilarious. It was a moonlight night.

"There was a big Franchise meeting at Harrington to-day, I believe," said one of the mildest of the lot.

"Yes, the fools!" growled Beau. "What do a lot of idiots like that mean by meeting? What can they know?"

"Why," said Lord Guernsey "I'll bet any money they know as much about reform as I do."

"Or are likely to know," added Beau.

"I suppose you mean that for sarcasm; but never mind, I'm not afraid of these people if you are—and now let me have a drink."

The youthful lord, who had not then succeeded to his title, smiled at his own thoughts, and helped himself to a brandy and soda.

Suddenly there came a murmur on the breeze—very slight, it seemed, but of a sort that every one noticed.

"What on earth is that?" asked Tom. No one answered.

Then again, louder, a confused, dull roar, and Beau started up, ran to the window, and looked out.

"What is it? what is it?" asked every one.

"Blessed if I can tell! There is a dark mass, and lights right away, far from here. They must be people—oh, yes! hark! how they are shouting! It will be the Franchise meeting breaking up!"

"Breaking up!" cried Tom, who had now joined him. "Rather say they are breaking in; breaking into the park, look!"

As he spoke the black mass was seen distinctly to be entering the park—how, no one could tell; and on they came with strangely uncanny noise.

"Coming to serenade us, I suppose?" said Beau, a little nervously.

"I hope so," said Tom; "but you'd better see the house is well secured; and—have your guns handy!"

Beau looked at him sharply. "My people can mean no harm," he muttered. "How is it possible?" But all the same, he left the room, and gave the necessary orders.

From the smoking room the guests gazed out on the black mass that came surging over the park with confused, drunken shouts, indistinguishable as yet. There must be several thousand of them—not Harrington men entirely, of course; but the relics—the off-scouring of the Liberal meeting.

Now, as they draw nearer, it is clear that their meaning is hostile. The angry tone of their roar is unmistakable, and, like a dark avalanche, they seem collected to burst over the grand old house. Beau

has returned now with half-a-dozen guns and cartridges.

"I say, you fellows," he says, half nervously, "you may as well have these, in case these drunken brutes won't listen to reason."

The young fellows were, of course, at that hour of the evening fully up to anything of the sort, and seized on the guns with many humorous assertions as to how they would deal with the enemy; but Beau, who could face an emergency as well as most people, and, to do him justice, had no spark of cowardice in his composition, went out into the hall, followed by one or two of his friends.

"Here, Jones," said he to the trembling butler, "get a lantern, quick—give me that stick; now open the door; come on with the light. Keep back, you with the guns."

And out he marched on to the lawn, with

the butler and the light, and confronted the mob as they rapidly advanced.

Instinctively, as it were, the whole mass stayed.

"I shall feel obliged, my friends, if you will tell me to what I am indebted, or to whom, for this visit?"

At these words from Beau there was a silence, then a grumbling murmur; then a big man shambled forward.

"The people did think, my Lord, that in these hard times it might be well to let you see what poor folk look like."

"Much obliged, I am sure. I wish they would come by daylight."

"Ay, ay; but it's not easy to come face to face this way in daylight, and some of us must be away by to-morrow. There's men here who want to see who it is that rack-rents his tenants."

"Who it is! Why, John Jones—for I see it's you; you'd better ask your teacher, Mr. Aspland, as to that. I believe we're all good Radicals here—down with Church and State—and all that!"

The mob gave an ambiguous cheer.

"All very well, my Lord; but Work for the workers, land for the people!—that's a better cry—there's a lot of gentlemen here that haven't had bit or sup all day—and you've got plenty—so send it out."

"Look here, John Jones!" cried Beau, losing his temper. "I shan't stand any more of your d—d insolence. Get back—you and your rabble, and thank your stars if I don't prosecute you—if any one comes on, by heaven I'll have him shot."

Jones fell back a little abashed; but the roar of the angry mob gave him fresh life, and he advanced—the people crowding up behind him.

"I don't want to shoot you," cried Beau; "but take this instead," and he landed his heavy stick full on the pate of the advancing Jones, who dropped like a pole-axed bullock.

Immediately the people rushed furiously forward, and Beau had only just time to beat a hasty retreat with the butler through the front doors—not time, in fact, for the people were on them before the door was shut, and for an instant all seemed lost, "Fire at them!" shouted Beau, mad with anger and outraged pride; and sure enough his friends did fire right into the mass outside the door, and amid the yells and the smoke banged-to the doors, barred them up, and were, for the moment. safe.

Yet how frightful was the feeling to these few youths in that hall! Not one had ever in his life killed or dreamed of

killing a man; till that moment they were all the most harmless of beings—now they had fired into a crowd, and the groans outside told their unmistakable tale.

But there was no time to palpitate and moralize; with a dash and a smash the infuriated crowd came on at the windows of the ground floor, and hither and thither the defenders rushed, firing through the broken glass in a manner that admitted of no denial. The mob of brute force had never dreamed of this—they had thought in these days of sickly humanitarianism the use of fire-arms was impossible. What a terrible awakening! Some five or six lay wounded or dead on the lawn. Others were sorely peppered; a great fear came upon the craven herd—then a panic; they bolted *en masse*, while the triumphant gunners ran out and blazed into them from the rear.

"Good God!" cried Beau, looking at the prostrate forms on the lawn. "What have we done?"

"Heavens!" cried Doctor Towler, rushing down in his dressing-gown and only just aroused; "is it thus that you prove yourself a Radical?"

CHAPTER XVII.

A scholar was about to marry.
His friend said, "Ere thou dost be wary;
So wise thou art that I foresee
A wife will make a fool of thee."
Walter Savage, Landor.

It happened as by a miracle that Beau and his friends had not actually killed any one in the extraordinary encounter narrated in the last chapter; and it also happened that by the free use of money he was enabled to get the affair hushed up, though, as may be well imagined, it was not forgotten by the men who had participated in the attack.

The occasion had not been without its compensating advantage. Miss D'Aguilar,

thinking some awful calamity was befalling the house, had rushed from her room, and simultaneously the night-capped head of Doctor Towler had been thrust out of his door to listen. Drowning men will catch at straws, panic-stricken women will seize any chance of safety. Thus it was that the frantic Miss D'Aguilar cast herself incontinently, and but slightly robed, into the arms of Doctor Towler.

Never before had he been in such a position, and his heart sank within him, as one who is half inclined to cry out for assistance; but Miss D'Aguilar clung wildly to him in an agony of fear at the sounds of firing on the ground floor, and after a few seconds he became more reassured.

"Poor lady!" he thought, "it is my duty to encourage her, or rather, that is, to comfort her!" and so he spoke, while the wind blowing through the door, which

he could not shut, caused him to shiver and his garment to flap—"Do not be alarmed, my dear Miss D'Aguilar; Plato has taught us the wisdom of being calm under all emergencies."

Miss D'Aguilar only shrieked once more, and the noise below stairs continued.

"Really," thought the Doctor, "what a terrible situation! yet it is my part to strengthen the weaker vessel, and really, if she would not cling around me like this, she is a very agreeable woman." Then aloud,—

"Miss D'Aguilar, you may place implicit confidence in me; I will protect you, I—I do not know why I should speak thus at this singularly inopportune period, but I love you—will you be mine if we survive this night?"

On this, Miss D'Aguilar, for the first time, recovered herself, shrieked, and fled to her own room.

It was then that the Doctor went downstairs, and reproached Beau with his perversion of Radical principles.

Next day Miss D'Aguilar and the Doctor were engaged—"no one to know anything about it for worlds!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Aurea nunc vere sunt sæcula, plurimus auro
Venit honos; auro conciliatur amor."

Ovid.

MEANWHILE Henry, in town, was keeping the game alive; a few more loans had been obtained from Marks, and the equity of redemption of the Manor Farm assigned as security. How much he signed for in bills he hadn't the slightest idea, but the fact remained unchanged that, having received comparatively little cash, he had charged his income and reversion with the payment for this farm—some 14,000*l.*—and now the farm itself was gone! Something must be wrong somewhere, but for the life of him he couldn't tell where the

weak point was. The only certain thing was that he was still hard up.

And now came the days of a different grade; he had ceased to be among the useful pigeons, and was comparatively set on one side; it was hinted to him that he could take his place among the other hangers on, at whom he had heretofore wondered.

"With what object?" he inquired.

"Oh—well, Lord Henry," said Marks, "we know that you have many good friends, and gentlemen always want money, and you can tell them where they can get it."

"I don't understand you," said Henry.

"Ah! now, that's business-like; you want to know what good it will do you? Well, then, let me see. If you introduce good men that want money, you shall have—"

"What?"

"Oh, just a little commission!"

"Thank you!" cried Henry, flushing scarlet. "Now I begin to understand you at last; you think because I am hard up that I will play jackal to you, and sell my own friends for a commission. Good God! Have I sunk so low as this?—that you should class me with your scurvy crew, whose occupation I now see. Fool that I was not to see it before! However, I have done with you, and thank your stars I don't break every bone in your body."

"Dear, dear! what a trouble over nothing! Perhaps, if you've done with me, you'll settle my little account."

Henry had not thought of this, but he cared not what happened now his blood was up.

"Look here, Marks! somehow or other you've swindled me; I don't know quite

how, but you have. What is more, I'll have the whole thing exposed; you may do what you like. As for your account, you may fish for it, you d—d old Shylock."

Having thus delivered himself, he dashed out of the room, leaving Mr. Marks a little green with suppressed anger.

There was just one ray of comfort when Henry got to his rooms—it was a note from Tom Elliot, who had run over to Epsom, to see the two-year-old which Henry had bought as a pig in a poke from Marks. The letter ran thus:—

Dear Henry,—I have seen the filly at Jenks. Do you know she is actually an own sister to Leander; one of the lot sold last year—you would remember her directly if you saw her.

Jenks says she is no good, but I can't believe that is so, and as Jenks himself is

a born fool, I have taken upon myself to send the filly to Newmarket to Matt Dawson. You'll soon hear if she's up to anything.

Yours affectionately,

TOM.

Henry soon forgot this letter, and being in sorry mood, sallied out in search of excitement that evening.

The name of Miss L'Eclair caught his eye on the play-bill of the Opera Comique; and without a thought he went to that theatre. Sitting in the stalls pleased him but ill, and having caught the eye of Miss L'Eclair, who was playing Ixion, he made his way to the stage entrance, and obtained admittance after some demur.

Arrived at the lady's dressing-room, he was annoyed to find there two gentlemen, evidently on the best of terms with her.

She received him with effusive pleasure, sent out for a bottle of champagne, and introduced the gentlemen as Colonel Shine and Mr. Vansittart. The former was a tall, military-looking man, about fifty, somewhat stout, but well-featured. The other, a shorter, more commonplace individual, with undeniably Jewish blood, and a great deal of jewellery.

"Well, Henry, old boy," said Miss L'Eclair, affectionately; "you have quite forgotten your old friends. I declare I oughtn't to speak to you now. But there! I am so glad to see you. Confound the call-boy! Ah, well, I *must* go!" and away she went, leaving the ill-pleased Henry with his two new companions.

"I am delighted to meet you, Lord Henry," said Colonel Shine. "I knew your poor father well. He was not only a duke, but a gentleman."

Henry bowed. The remark was not a bad one.

"It is a pity," continued Colonel Shine, "there are not more like him, to resist the degrading tendency of legislation, and keep up the good old English name."

"You are a Conservative," said Henry.

"A Tory—an old Tory, Lord Henry."

"Nay, said Henry; a Tory should never resist anything that brings the nation into harmony and communion with itself."

"Oh, my dear Lord, you are quite mistaken! My friend Vansittart here could set you right on that point. Now, don't interrupt; let Vansittart speak; only listen to Vansittart."

"Indeed, my Lord, it is not much I can say," said Vansittart; "but that little is, that where you have a large population in a small country, the rich must have the

upper hand, otherwise you get confiscation legalized."

"But," said Henry, "it is as much to the interest of the poor man as any other that the property he hopes to gain should be secure."

"Maybe it is in theory, but the starving man looking at a bread-loaf is apt to abandon theories, and so it is in other ways. Now, were we in England like they are in America, where there is land and money for all, then we could trust the Government of all."

"But is that so in America?" asked Henry.

"Why, of course! Both in America and the Colonies! There are mines alone enough to enrich every one. Colonel Shine here will tell you how he is director of a gold company in Queensland, adjoining the Great Jumbo mine, from which thirty million dollars have been taken."

"Really!"

"Yes, indeed; and one of the first proprietors of the latter worked a queer game with it; he was down in the mine, when they struck a bonanza; and what should he do but go up the shaft, take up all the gear, so that the men couldn't get out; then off to the town, where he bought up all the hams, tongues, bread, wine, and other stores he could,—sufficient to keep the men a fortnight,—took and lowered them down the shaft; and then away to St. Francisco, no one but himself having thus had a chance of knowing what was up. Well, he so schemed that he and another bought up all the stock for next to nothing; then he goes back to the mine, lets the men out, gives them a hundred dollars each for the bother, and so to work. Thirty millions did they take from that mine."

"Extraordinary!" said Henry. "Is there anything left in the mine?"

"Hundreds of millions, my lord, and we are about to offer an adjoining one to the British public."

"But how did you ever get hold of it?"

"Because the late proprietor ruined himself by gambling on Change. By the way, my lord, we want another director before bringing the thing out. Will you join the board? There's 500*l.* a year, with a share in profits; and only 1000*l.* qualification, which I would arrange. Colonel Shine here is a director, and Lord Despard. The Duke of Chester is chairman. You will, I hope, not mind my asking you here; but I know you so well by name, and I am quite sure you will be of value to us, while the addition to your income may be of value to you."

"Vansittart means every word he says," interposed Colonel Shine. "Do join us, Lord Henry. It is a first-rate venture."

"All right," said Henry. "I'll join;

can't do any harm, I suppose, and seems like doing good."

"Capital!" cried Mr. Vansittart. "I wish all directors had the same pluck you have, my lord. The office is at 99A, Lombard Street, and if you can contrive to come there to-morrow at three p.m., we will arrange all details; and now you want to talk to L'Eclair, I know, so the Colonel and I will leave you."

Henry went home, thinking he was in luck at last, and that Miss L'Eclair would be a really good sort if she wouldn't hold *levées* of others than himself.

Next day he duly went to the office of the Great Jumbo (West) Gold Mining Company, Limited, where he found the Duke of Chester, Lord Despard, Colonel Shine, and the other directors, together with Mr. Vansittart and the secretary, a sharp-eyed, large-headed man with bow

legs, who evinced the greatest anxiety to bring to his notice a large number of samples, which might or might not contain gold for aught Henry knew, and to initiate him from maps on the walls into the mysteries of sinking, cross-cutting, drifts, lodes, and so forth. On paper the mine looked magnificent.

The Duke of Chester had himself seen the adjoining property, had brought home several pieces of ore, which analysis had proved to be of fabulous value. Professor Leckie had reported that the same lode must necessarily be found in the property of the Company, and after reducing a moderate estimate by one half, to allow for all possible casualties, he staked his reputation on the statement that there were 100,000,000 dollars of gold in the Great Jumbo (West), and presenting no great difficulty to extract it therefrom.

The directors were to have one-tenth share of the profits after the shareholders had been first paid twenty-five per cent., "which," said Mr. Vansittart, "should soon give the directors 10,000*l.* a year each."

"Who is Vansittart?" said Henry to Shine. "Is he a director?"

"No," whispered Colonel Shine. "He is the promoter; but don't on any account call him by that name. 'Vendor' sounds better."

"Ah, well," said Henry. He seems a clever fellow. Now, as I am to be a director, I suppose I've got to sign some papers?"

Of course he had, and he signed all that he was asked to.

CHAPTER XIX.

"If ye be bold with us to go,
Things such as happy dreams may show,
Shall your once heavy eyes behold
About our palaces of gold."
Life and Death of Jason.

TIME passed on, and Henry and his colleagues on the board of the Great Jumbo (West) Gold Mining Company (Limited) met very frequently.

The Great Jumbo (West) Gold Mining Company (Limited), Capital £300,000, was eventually launched, a recent addition to the board of directors having been made in the person of one Mr. Kingdon, a mining engineer, with, it was said, eighteen years' experience of the locality in which

the property was situated. "So well do I think of this property," wrote Mr. Kingdon in his report, which was printed with the prospectus, "that I have myself consented to join the board;"—of course Mr. Kingdon received a proper fee for this report, but what of that?

A few days' previous to the launching of the company, reports were circulated and came to the ears of all men in the City that the Great Jumbo property was simply a *mountain of gold.*

The day before the advertisement of the prospectus, the *Financial Scalp-Awakener* published a glowing leader on the auriferous qualities of this particular locality. Vansittart pointed to this article with grim pleasure. "That is my doing," said he to the bow-legged secretary.

And now when the name of Great Jumbo was equivalent in the ideas of the

multitude to wealth untold—there flashed forth in the daily papers the advertisement of the Great Jumbo (West) Gold Mining Company (Limited). Who cared whether it was West or East—it was Great Jumbo —that was enough:—so from the earliest hour when the prospectus appeared the office of the company was besieged with frantic applicants for prospectuses, and the bankers were driven distracted by the madding crowd that from ten o'clock till four fought and struggled to thrust their application forms and cheques over the counter. Never had there been such a rush. Before the day was out the capital of the Great Jumbo (West) had been subscribed for over and over again, and the shares stood at a premuim in the market.

The company had been triumphantly floated, and there was, therefore, a respect-

able balance at the bank, albeit the great bulk of the money was due to the vendor. By some means or other Henry found himself the holder of 2000*l.* worth of shares, and in receipt of 500*l.* per annum, with indefinite prospects of increase.

Most wise did all these directors look, more especially the Duke of Chester, who had been to the adjoining mine, and brought back gold from it, and any one might have thought that they knew what they were about on the subject of mining, whereas, in point of fact, they were utterly ignorant. The bow-legged, big-headed secretary really did all the work, though he was diplomatist enough to make the chairman usually think that the best suggestions were his own. Henry could never understand the thing at all; only one point was clear, they were paying out money with wonderful rapidity to the vendor. He ven-

tured to mention this one day, but the secretary smilingly referred him to a report received that day, in which much unintelligible language was used, but which was said to be eminently satisfactory. Colonel Shine clinched the matter by saying, "Oh, my dear fellow, you should ask Vansittart; Vansittart is the cleverest man in the city; he assures me the mine is fabulously rich."

"Oh, I've no doubt it's all right," said Henry, and thought no more of the matter; indeed, when next he met Mr. Vansittart, the mine had so escaped his memory that he listened only to the tempting suggestions which that gentleman made as to speculating on the Stock Exchange. Nor was it long before Mr. Vansittart had persuaded him to purchase 30,000*l.* Turkish Bonds, on joint account, through the medium of a leading firm of stock-brokers.

It was pointed out to Henry that Turks

paid about fifteen per cent. on their then price, and as it would only cost four per cent. to keep on carrying them over from fortnight to fortnight the transaction must needs be profitable. The prospect of a fall in the stock was not considered, and Mr. Vansittart, seeing that the brokers gave him a share in their commissions resulting from the business thus introduced, was fairly satisfied. The first fortnight the stocks fell one point; and Vansittart, "owing to being disappointed in a large remittance from Australia," couldn't pay anything. Henry settled the broker's account, and hoped for better luck next time.

Very soon, however, there came sinister rumours of something not right with Great Jumbo (West). Some said there was no such property at all; some that it was nowhere near the actual Great Jumbo;

others that a shaft had already been sunk in the property to a considerable depth with the result that no gold was found there—and finally it was averred that the actual bed-rock price of the thing was about 5000*l.* Who had got the intermediate balance between that and the 250,000*l.* which the company was giving?

Henry questioned Vansittart on this, who treated the matter lightly. "My dear fellow," said he, "I neither know nor care. We have got a mine well worth our money, and we have the capital to work it with; that is all you need consider."

Meanwhile the shares drooped and drooped and were at three-eighths discount, so that the hungry speculators, technically styled "Stags," who had applied for them simply with a view to turn them over at a profit, were caught in many cases and were furious accordingly.

Then came a telegram from Queensland, in which the Queensland Premier was represented to have warned the British public against Bogus Mines which were being foisted on them, and it needed the utmost arts of Mr. Kingdon to persuade the directors that this could not by any possibility refer to the Great Jumbo (West), more especially when it was discovered on reading the letters in possession of Vansittart, on which the prospectus was based, that they were actually in possession of the fact that a shaft had been sunk on their property, on which point the prospectus had maintained a discreet silence.

"Oh," said Kingdon, "that only means that the people in possession are obliged to make some slight show of mining, or they would forfeit the claim. They have been grubbing away with a few men just

to keep the claim alive—nothing more, believe me."

And so the directors were satisfied, and told Mr. Kingdon to select and order the necessary machinery, but in the mining market the shares were now unsaleable.

What a life was this, for any one who dreamed of doing good work! The mere feverish craze of speculation, the unhealthy atmosphere of company-mongering, amid which there is truly more rascality than in any other phase of life?

It is strange indeed that the Limited Liability Acts, which have opened the way to a continuous plundering of the public, have not been amended ere this, so as to render such iniquity impossible; but the powers of evil are strong, and no one seems to venture to tackle the question. It is a fact, however, that these Companies' Acts have given rise to a state of morality

which makes men who would abhor individual theft or other crime, yet consider the public in general as perfectly fair subjects of plunder.

It was never intended that the ægis of the law should be extended to bogus undertakings and deliberate swindles, yet these things will be until it is enacted that no company be registered at Somerset House under the Acts unless those connected with it have satisfied a public officer as to the bona fides of the scheme, and that there is enough working capital to carry it on.

And while Henry was thus grovelling among City impurities, there was brave work going forward at Westminster. He had not forgotten that, but he had neglected it. Bah! He was growing contemptible, and he was now of age.

There, in a House of Commons the

majority of which he could not command, Disraeli was engaged in doing what five other Governments, even with majorities, had failed to do. He had tackled the question of Reform, and at last things were going forward, though all the powers of envy, obstruction, and delay were exerted against him.

From the 11th of February to the end others fell away. Many doubted, many scoffed, but the "solitary gladiator," the man who had once been laughed down, was making them hear him now, and through the tortuous path which foes beset on all sides was carrying on his great project, undeterred by anything in the world. Perhaps no other man that ever lived could have stood up successfuly against the opposition of friend and foe as Disraeli did in those dark days.

It was on the evening of the 26th of

February when Henry had first taken any note of the matter. He was at a reception of Mrs. Montresor's, at her charming house in Eaton Place, where everything was always so well done, except that the hostess was too inclined to advertise herself and her husband.

Mr. Adolphus Montresor had commenced life as the son of a small publisher, but had contrived to get back over that, rush up a family tree, and make himself out to be some great one. Mrs. Montresor was very distantly connected with a noble family, though in the immediate past nothing was known of her antecedents. She was a clever, pushing woman, he a hard-working, business-like man, and somehow or other the papers had written them up the social ladder till they now stood alongside the best, though derided behind their backs, as the fashion is.

Mrs. Montresor was a great politician, and expected that Adolphus would find favour with the party next election. Anyhow, she left no stone unturned to bring about this result, and knowing Henry to be on good terms with Disraeli, she lost no opportunity of paying him attention.

On the occasion in question she had greeted Henry most cordially, and asked with genuine curiosity, while others near them waited for the reply, "Now do tell me, Lord Henry, what does it all mean; is there going to be a break up of the ministry; will there be a dissolution?"

Henry had been in the City really and not noticed any part of the papers except the prices on the Stock Exchange; but he thought it best to be mysterious.

"I have heard a good deal, Mrs. Montresor; but even to *you* I may not tell it."

"Well this is too bad, you might give some hint. The Reform Bill withdrawn; General Peel, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Cranbourne resigned—why is it? oh, do tell me! Can Disraeli possibly stand after this?"

"I think Disraeli would stand under any circumstances whatever—"

"Yes, yes, he is a marvellous man; but don't you think a little unprincipled?"

"On the contrary, Mrs. Montresor, he has rather too much principle on this question for his party to swallow kindly. Ah! here is Sir John Pakington—perhaps he can tell you something."

Mrs. Montresor bestowed her sweetest smile on the War Secretary, as he advanced up the beautifully ornamented staircase, and without any hesitation asked him to tell her, if possible, what meant this strange political upheaval.

Sir John was an admirable man in many ways, but he was not skilled at keeping a secret, and Mrs. Montresor knew it well. Without any show even of reluctance, he plunged incontinently into a remarkable narrative. "Well, Mrs. Montresor, I can hardly help laughing, but I suppose it's no laughing matter; we were under the impression that a comprehensive measure of Reform which we proposed to introduce yesterday was unanimously approved by the Cabinet. Goodness knows how the mistake occurred, but occur it did, for we were hastily summoned on Monday. Some leading members of the Cabinet had refused point-blank to have anything to do with the comprehensive Bill! Lord Derby had to address a meeting of the party at 2.30. It was now two o'clock. Disraeli had to introduce the Bill in the House of Com-

mons at 4.30. I verily believe that we hadn't ten minutes left for decision. Fortunately we had another Bill on hand of a milder order, and rightly or wrongly, we decided in that brief ten minutes that Disraeli should go down and introduce this Bill instead of the other."

"Good heavens, Sir John! a ten minutes' Bill!"

"Just so, Mrs. Montresor; and Cranbourne, Carnarvon and Co., were thus induced to stay; but it was no use, the thing fell flat; so we had to withdraw it and come back to our old love after all, and so the threatened secession has come, and Cranbourne has been saying very bitter things."

"Well, I never heard of such a thing, and yet Lord Henry here talks of Disraeli being a man of principle."

"I don't think, Mrs. Montresor, he

failed here in principle; one might rather say he failed in presence of mind."

"And after all," added Sir John, "remember we had only ten minutes for deliberation."

Henry passed on through the brilliant and beautiful rooms amid the crowd of notables, and everywhere he heard expressions of doubt as to the possibility of the Derby Ministry standing, and not a few words far from complimentary to Disraeli caught his ear. He was leading his party to destruction for his own aggrandisement; he was falsifying every profession he ever made. He was a Radical in disguise.

"Ay," thought Henry, "they called him Radical in '35; and they call him one now; yet they say he is inconsistent. Fools!"

END OF VOL. II.

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